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STUDIES OF THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD AFFAIRS

European Population Transfers

1939-1945

JOSEPH B. SCHECHTMAN



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Preface

THIS volume is the third publication of the Institute of World Affairs to issue from a research project on European postwar reconstruction, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. Like Ernst Fraenkel's *Military Occupation and the Rule of Law* and Arnold Brecht's *Federalism and Regionalism in Germany*, this book mirrors a phase of the profound social transformation in Central and Southeastern Europe and its implications for the years that lie ahead. The immediacy of the problem discussed in the present study was emphasized by the Potsdam Declaration, which envisaged population transfer as an instrument for the final peace settlement.

In line with the principles held by the Institute, the author alone is responsible for the views expressed, but we share his hope that the lessons of the past will be heeded in the shaping of the future.

ADOLPH LOWE

*Executive Director of
Research, Institute of
World Affairs*

Contents

PREFACE BY ADOLPH LOWE, v

INTRODUCTION, ix

PART I. BACKGROUND

- I. THE MINORITIES PROBLEM IN EUROPE BETWEEN WORLD
WARS, 3

PART II. TRANSFER OF GERMAN MINORITIES

- II. GERMAN REICH POLICY ON GERMAN MINORITIES ABROAD, 27
III. TRANSFER OF THE SOUTH TYROL GERMANS, 48
IV. GERMAN MINORITIES IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA, 66
V. TRANSFER OF THE GERMANS FROM ESTONIA AND LATVIA, 82
VI. ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN TRANS-
FERS, 109
VII. TRANSFER FROM LITHUANIA AND SUBSEQUENT RETURN, 131
VIII. TRANSFER OF THE GERMANS FROM THE SOVIET-INCORPORATED
POLISH PROVINCES, 145
IX. TRANSFER OF THE GERMANS FROM SOVIET-INCORPORATED BES-
SARABIA AND NORTHERN BUKOVINA, 174
X. TRANSFER OF THE BLACK SEA GERMANS, 206
XI. GERMAN TRANSFER AND POPULATION POLICY IN GOVERN-
MENT GENERAL AND IN SOVIET WOLHYNIA, 214
XII. TRANSFER AND ELIMINATION OF THE GERMANS FROM RO-
MANIA, 225
XIII. TRANSFER OF THE GERMANS FROM DISMEMBERED YUGO-
SLAVIA, 238
XIV. TRANSFER OF THE GERMANS FROM BULGARIA, 250

PART III. GERMAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

- XV. THE TERRITORY OF RESETTLEMENT, 255
- XVI. CLEARING OF THE RESETTLEMENT AREA, 266
- XVII. THE MACHINERY OF RESETTLEMENT, 272
- XVIII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE RESETTLEMENT, 281
- XIX. GERMANIZATION OF THE SOIL, 288
- XX. GERMANIZATION OF THE TOWNS, 301
- XXI. RESETTLEMENT OF THE BALTS, 317
- XXII. VICISSITUDES OF THE GERMAN COLONIZATION POLICY, 334
- XXIII. END OF THE TRANSFER PERIOD, 347
- XXIV. RESISTANCE OF THE POLISH POPULATION, 354

PART IV. TRANSFER OF NON-GERMAN MINORITIES

- XXV. TRANSFER POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION, 367
- XXVI. FINNISH TRANSFER POLICY, 388
- XXVII. REPATRIATION OF THE ESTONIAN SWEDES, 400
- XXVIII. THE BULGARIAN-ROMANIAN EXCHANGE OF POPULATION, 404
- XXIX. BULGARIAN POPULATION POLICY IN THE ANNEXED YUGOSLAV AND GREEK PROVINCES, 415
- XXX. UNORGANIZED EXCHANGE OF POPULATION BETWEEN ROMANIA AND HUNGARY, 425
- XXXI. HUNGARIAN REPATRIATION POLICY, 434
- XXXII. CROAT REPATRIATION POLICY, 440
- XXXIII. MINOR POPULATION TRANSFERS, 444

PART V. CONCLUSIONS

- XXXIV. POPULATION TRANSFER IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT, 451

APPENDIXES

- I. TRANSFER OF MINORITIES IN EUROPE, 1939-45 (TABULATION), 482
- II. TURKISH REPATRIATION POLICY (1933-40), 488
- III. THE OPTION CLAUSE IN THE REICH TRANSFER TREATIES, 497
- BIBLIOGRAPHY, 509
- INDEX, 521

Introduction

THE primary purpose of this book is to give as complete a picture as possible of all aspects of population transfers in Europe during World War II. In so far as the author has been able to determine, there exists no study of this period comparable to the exhaustive works by Sfériades, Ladas, Wurfbain, Rodonachi, and Streit, and to the League of Nations reports on the prewar transfers that served as precedents for those conducted during the war years.

The scope and character of the study have been largely determined by the fact that it is a pioneer in its field. Every effort has been made to present a full factual report of the transfer operations that occurred between 1939 and 1945. To establish these facts and their chronology and interdependence, as well as their political and economic background, necessitated the use of original material scattered through thousands of newspapers, periodicals and books. The picture is admittedly incomplete. Lack of data or the unreliability of available material are responsible for most of the gaps.

By far the greatest part of the information has been gleaned from newspaper reports, and the appropriate use of such sources is conceded to be exceptionally difficult. Furthermore, most of this material is of German origin. Inasmuch as the majority of the transfers effected during the war years were concerned with the removal of German minorities, in line with the program inaugurated by Hitler's Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939, it is inevitable that there should be a predominance of German data. This same predominance exists, however, in the data on transfers other than the German, and the dearth of non-German

sources has been a major obstacle in the assembling and evaluation of the material for this book.

In connection with the matter of sources, it is necessary to note here that certain information, especially with regard to recent developments, has been drawn from unpublished material which the author is not at liberty to cite, but for whose reliability he is prepared to accept full responsibility.

For the purpose of this study, a population transfer has been considered to be the organized removal of an ethnic group from its country of residence, and its subsequent resettlement in territories under the sovereignty of its ethnic homeland, an operation generally based on interstate agreement. Each major transfer has been dealt with separately, according to the area from which the minority group was removed. The presence of certain important elements common to all such operations suggested an arrangement of material on topical rather than on regional lines, but this plan was rejected as being conducive to a rather deadly schematization. Such treatment would also have obscured the peculiar features of each transfer and their special origins. Where the data have been sufficient, an effort has been made to include not only all the pertinent details of the actual transfer, and the broad policies involved, but also to interpret the project in the framework of the larger international political constellation created by the events of the fall of 1939.

This study was undertaken in the fall of 1941 and continued for two years under the auspices of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, which organization was helpful in many ways beyond the term of its actual sponsorship. Since 1944 the work has been carried on under the auspices of the Institute of World Affairs.

Grateful acknowledgment is hereby made to Dr. Jacob Robinson, Director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, as well as to Mr. Nehemiah Robinson and Professor Max Laserson for generous co-operation and valuable suggestions. The author wishes to thank Dr. Adolph Lowe, Executive Director of Research of

the Institute of World Affairs, for his inestimable advice and guidance. Thanks are also due to the Right Honorable Harold S. Butler of the British Embassy in Washington, Professor Warren S. Thompson of Miami University, and Dr. E. M. Kulischer for their careful reading of the manuscript and their constructive comments.

Particularly grateful acknowledgment is made to Miss Janet Rosenwald who, as editor, co-operated for more than a year with the author and contributed unstintingly of her time and ability to the preparation of this volume in its present shape.

JOSEPH B. SCHECHTMAN

New York, 15 October 1945

PART I

BACKGROUND

I

The Minorities Problem in Europe Between World Wars

THE nineteenth century in European history has been aptly characterized as the 'century of nationalities.' The awakening of 'non-historic nations,' the longing for national freedom and unity on the part of peoples under alien domination or divided by artificial state frontiers, the strengthening of the will to national self-determination were among the most powerful driving forces of the period. In its absolute form, the principle of nationalities, as expressed by Johann Caspar Bluntschli,¹ would mean that the whole of each nationality should comprise a homogeneous national state and, conversely, that each state should consist of only one nationality. Several wars have been waged and numerous lesser contests engaged in for the realization of this principle. The liberation and unification of Germany and Italy, the creation of an independent Romania, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria are the most spectacular results of such struggles. The application of the principle of nationalities, however, was far from complete. A glance at a map of the Balkans and Central Europe on the eve of World War I reveals that in this area alone Imperial Germany, the Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, and Czarist Russia ruled over some 60 million alien people.

World War I was avowedly fought for the liberation and self-determination of small nations. The peace conference that assembled in Paris at the close of the war and undertook to recast

¹ Bluntschli, *Theory of State*.

the frontiers of European countries was strongly influenced by the principle of nationalities and made a determined effort to draw state borders in conformity with ethnic considerations.² But the framers of Europe's new political map, which included seven new states and two 'free territories,' could not apply the nationalities principle in every instance. In that area roughly designated as Central-Eastern Europe, nationalities had become so inextricably intermingled through the various Slavic, German, and Magyar migrations over a period of more than a thousand years, that it proved impossible to draw any political frontier without creating a minority somewhere. Self-determination for one group inevitably meant alien rule for another. Furthermore, even if it had been possible to be entirely consistent with regard to ethnic frontiers, there were conflicting economic, geographic, strategic, and historic considerations that carried even greater weight in the final decisions. As a result, not one of the new states was uni-national, nor was there any one national group all of whose members lived in a single state.

Thus, at the end of the war, in the Balkans alone (including Hungary), within an area not much larger than Texas, there lived 60 million persons representing 6 religions and 15 ethnic groups and divided among 7 states. Actually, almost all 28 states of postwar Europe—old, enlarged, or newly created—contained more or less sizable groups of persons who differed widely from the ruling majority in race, language, or religion. The existence of these minorities proved to be one of the major obstacles to both the political unity of these states and the peace of the Continent.

² Roderic Peattie stresses that on the eve of World War II Europe had 7.3 miles of political frontier for every 1,000 square miles of territory, while in North America, including the greatly subdivided area of Central America, the ratio is 1.3 miles for every 1,000 square miles. In 1937, there were 52 boundary disputes recorded, that is, 52 areas claimed by one country but held by another. There was hardly a country without a so-called irredentist or 'lost' territory. (Peattie, *Look to the Frontiers*, p. 64.)

Much has been said against the peace settlement of 1919, and it has become a commonplace to blame the Versailles, St. Germain, and Neuilly treaties for all the misfortunes of Europe. It must be acknowledged, however, that even though the treaties increased the number of frontiers and tariff barriers in the Balkans and Central Europe, they also reduced the total minorities population in this area from 60 million to some 20 to 25 million. This situation was far from ideal, but it represented a vast improvement over the recent past. A more rigorous application of the principle of self-determination might have led to a further reduction of the total of minorities under foreign domination. This is especially true with regard to the Bulgarian-Romanian, Hungarian-Czechoslovak, and Hungarian-Romanian frontiers, where certain limited territorial adjustments would have brought about a considerable *detente*.

Most of the minority problems, however, were too complicated to be solved by any slight revision of a state frontier. In many cases, ethnic groups constituted large enclaves, and they were either too scattered to be brought together, or they had no territorial link with their parent nation. It was repeatedly suggested, for instance, that many Romanian and Yugoslav Magyars could be given back to Hungary, but such a move would have resulted automatically in the transformation of their immediate Romanian and Yugoslav neighbors into new national minorities in Hungary. As for the largest ethnic minority in Central and Southeastern Europe—the Germans—it must be realized that the responsibility for their situation can be attributed only in part to the political arrangements of the peace treaties of 1919; its roots go back much further than that, to the ancient migrations of German-speaking peoples and to early conquests. The several million Germans scattered through these sections of Europe constituted a problem incapable of any clear-cut solution.

II

At the time of the drafting of the World War I treaties, it was generally agreed that the protection of ethnic and religious minorities was a characteristic implication of the democratic ideal and that the rights and interests of these groups could not be left to the mercy of the states in which they were incorporated. International agreements were deemed the most suitable method of safeguarding minority rights and of securing international and national peace. Accordingly, minorities treaties were concluded between the Allies and the newly created or enlarged states: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Greece, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene state. Similarly, provisions for the protection of minorities were included in the treaties with Germany's late allies: Austria, Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. And finally, the five new states that did not owe their creation to the Versailles system—Albania, Estonia, Iraq, Latvia, and Lithuania—were required to sign a declaration with regard to their minorities as a precondition for their admission into the League of Nations.³ This system of international guarantees was put under the control of the League, which assumed the task, although with considerable reluctance, and established a machinery and procedure for supervising the execution of the minorities treaties.

The international protection of minorities was not an invention of the Versailles system. Special minorities provisions had been known for more than two hundred years—from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to the treaty of Berlin in 1878. The innovation of the Versailles system resided primarily in the collective nature of the proposed enforcement of the minorities treaties. The collective responsibility of the League of Nations was designed to supplant the individual responsibility of the signatory

³ The victorious Allied powers, the Soviet Union, Germany, Finland, and the neutral states were exempted from any formal obligations with regard to their minorities.

powers and to eliminate the odium traditionally attached to the intervention of individual foreign powers in the internal affairs of a state bound by pledges for the protection of its minorities. Furthermore, the collective and impersonal character of any eventual intervention on the part of the League was intended to abolish not only the necessity for, but even the possibility of, intervention on the part of any individual state for the sake of its related minority group in another state.

As it worked out, the control exercised by the League of Nations, far from superseding the traditional interference by interested states, functioned—though quite inadequately—in addition to it, because one group of states was vitally interested in such interference. Immediately after World War I, two opposing blocs began to take shape among the European countries: those that were satisfied with their frontiers, and those that were not. In the first group, composed of the so-called *status quo* countries, were the victorious Allied powers and Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The second group included Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria, termed the ‘revisionist’ states because they wanted to alter their postwar frontiers to their advantage. From the early 1930’s on they were supported by Italy, the only one of the victorious nations that was not satisfied with her share of the gains won by the war.

Paralleling these two groups of states were two groups of minorities. The first was composed of those who either willingly or reluctantly accepted their minority status and cherished no hopes for any change of sovereignty. Their aspirations were limited to the preservation of their civic equality and to securing the right to develop their group heritage—cultural, religious, or national. They firmly believed that these aims could be achieved within the framework of the states in which they lived on the basis of the international minorities treaties. They demanded the fullest possible implementation of the pledges given by these treaties; those who did not enjoy protection of the treaties sought

to be accorded similar guarantees. Their attitude was fully expressed at the Fourth Congress of European Minorities, in 1929, by Professor Maspons I. Anglasesell, delegate of the Catalan minority in Spain, who declared: 'We stake all our hopes on the League of Nations.'⁴ Included in this category were all the weak minorities of Europe: the Jews in Eastern Europe, the Danes and Lusatian Serbs in Germany, the Basques and Catalonians in Spain, the Russians, Swedes, and Germans in the Baltic states, the Russians in Poland, and many others.

It is true that the situation of the Jewish minorities in Romania, Poland, and several other countries bound by the minorities treaties was bad and steadily worsening. They and other groups complained that their vital rights and interests were being violated and that the application of the minorities treaties was being sabotaged. Very few states—namely, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, and, in some instances, Yugoslavia—really complied with the treaty provisions. The declaration of Polish Foreign Minister Beck at Geneva in 1934, which was tantamount to Poland's repudiation of her international minority obligations and which inaugurated the ultimate disintegration of the League system for the protection of minorities, provoked deep disillusionment and dissatisfaction among the *status quo* minorities.

Nevertheless, this situation did not alter in any way their basic loyalty to the states of which they were citizens. For this reason, although these minorities represented a source of growing uneasiness, they never constituted a real threat to the peace of Europe. Difficult and complex as the problem was, it was not insoluble within the structure established at Versailles. More good will on the part of the majority peoples and their governments, better legislation and administrative practice, more effective control by the League of Nations would have improved the situation immeasurably and would have created a tolerable

⁴ *Sitzungsbericht des vierten Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas*, 1926, p. 29.

modus vivendi. Such conditions could not have been easily realized, but they were not of themselves beyond the realm of possibility.

The second category of minorities comprised those ethnic groups which prior to the Versailles Treaty had formed part of a ruling nation and now longed for a return to their prewar status. It was composed mainly of German, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and, in a somewhat different sense, Ukrainian and White Russian minorities, who refused to accept a minority status within the states of their residence. Actually, in several cases, such as that of the Sudeten Germans or the Ukrainians in Galicia, they constituted the majority in the immediate area they inhabited and claimed that their minority status was created exclusively by their artificial attachment to the state to which they belonged. This contention was voiced repeatedly at sessions of the Congress of European Minorities. As early as 1929, Dr. Jesser, a Sudeten German senator, declared: 'The Germans of Czechoslovakia are not an ethnological minority in the territory occupied by the Czechs, but a part of the totality of the area of the German people, thrust beyond the present state frontiers.'⁵ Two years later, Dr. Peters, the Sudeten German deputy, was still more outspoken: 'We are *de jure* . . . a minority . . . but we must state that we do not believe that we can . . . manage with the stinting provisions of the minorities protection.'⁶ In 1932, Dr. Jaross, Hungarian deputy in Czechoslovakia, complained that the Congress was still attempting to protect the right of minorities within the present state frontiers, and added: 'There were always minorities in Europe who did not agree to this principle and the number of minorities taking a more radical stand . . . will increase.' He praised the attitude 'of those who watch the collapse [of the *status quo*] because they see in these

⁵ *Sitzungsbericht des fünften Kongresses* . . . , 1929, p. 73.

⁶ *Sitzungsbericht des siebenten Kongresses* . . . , 1931, p. 60.

ruins not merely the evil of the present, but the promise of the future.' ⁷

Swayed by such convictions, the irredentist minorities often neglected the duties of their citizenship and continually looked to their powerful co-national states for help, developing eventually into what has come to be known as a fifth column. German, Magyar, and Bulgarian minorities living in the territories lost to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia functioned actively in the service of German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian revisionism against the interests of the countries of which they were citizens. This recalcitrance was, in many instances, nourished and intensified by government policy in the countries of their residence, which frequently sinned against both the letter and the spirit of the minorities treaties and disregarded the basic rights and interests of the minority groups. Such action considerably strengthened the position of the most intransigent elements among the irredentist minorities, who, embittered by unfortunate experience, often flatly rejected any overtures from the majorities for an amiable solution of pending conflicts. This obstinate non-co-operation held the majorities suspended in a state of perpetual exasperation. The relation grew steadily worse and finally degenerated into a situation without an issue.

III

Eduard Benes, who took an active part in the shaping of the European state frontiers after the last war, put his finger on the crux of the whole problem when he wrote that it was not possible 'to create states which were linguistically and nationally homogeneous, except by extensive transfers of population.' Such a course had actually been proposed by the French sociologist, Bernard Lavergne, but had been rejected, 'apparently on the grounds that it ran counter to the idealistic tendencies governing

⁷ *Sitzungsbericht des achten Kongresses . . .*, 1932, p. 141.

the 1919 plans for the new Europe.’⁸ Nevertheless, during the years between World War I and World War II, several population transfers were essayed, and the salient features of these operations must be noted as a background for the widespread application of the transfer policy inaugurated in 1939.

The first interstate treaty on the exchange of populations in modern history was the Convention of Adrianople, concluded between Bulgaria and Turkey in November 1913 as a sequel to the peace treaty of Constantinople. The two countries ‘agreed to facilitate the voluntary exchange of Bulgarians and Moslems as well as of their property within a 15-kilometer zone along the common frontier.’⁹ As a matter of fact, the frontier population affected by this convention had already left their homes before the conclusion of the peace, so that the intention of the contracting parties was simply to confirm and regularize a *fait accompli*.¹⁰ The ‘exchange’ involved more than 93,000 persons: 44,764 Bulgarians from Turkish Thrace and 48,570 Moslems from Bulgarian territory.¹¹ A mixed Turko-Bulgar commission was set up for the appraisal of the properties left by the emigrants,¹² but Turkey’s entry into the war in 1914 caused its work to be discontinued, and no settlement was ever made.

The Greco-Turkish agreement of 1914 on the exchange of minority populations was similar in character and outcome. It also sanctioned an already established situation created by the Turkish government, which early in 1914 had forced 150,000

⁸ Benes, ‘The Organization of Post-War Europe,’ in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1942, p. 235.

⁹ Stelio Sefériades, ‘L’échange des populations,’ in *Académie de Droit International, Recueil des cours*, 1928, iv, pp. 352-3.

¹⁰ Wurfbain, *L’échange Greco-Bulgare des minorités ethniques*, p. 31. According to Wurfbain, the emigration of the minority members who had not yet left, although voluntary in theory, was virtually compulsory, and the limitation of the affected zone to 15 kilometers was not observed.

¹¹ Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, p. 20. Unless otherwise indicated, the facts and figures cited in the following pages of this chapter are taken from Ladas’s work.

¹² Sefériades, *op. cit.* p. 353.

Greeks to leave the Aegean coast and to seek refuge in Greece, and had deported another 50,000 to the interior of Anatolia. In May of that year, the Greek and Turkish governments reached a preliminary agreement providing for the voluntary exchange of the inhabitants of the Greek villages in Thrace and in the *vilayet* of Smyrna for the Moslem peasants of Greek Macedonia and Epirus. The whole arrangement, however, was rendered inoperative by Turkey's entry into the war.

These agreements of 1913 and 1914 may be deemed the forerunners of the Convention of Neuilly of 1919 and the Convention of Lausanne of 1923, for they prepared the ground for the idea of the exchange of populations as a radical but possible means of solving the painful, age-old problem of ethnic minorities in the Balkans. In July 1919, when the Greek Premier, Venizelos, submitted to the peace conference in Paris his project for a 'racial adjustment' between Greece and Bulgaria on the basis of a reciprocal emigration of Greeks residing in Bulgaria to Greece and Bulgarians residing in Greece to Bulgaria, it was readily accepted. A convention for the exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria was signed on 27 November 1920 at Neuilly-sur-Seine by the Greek and Bulgarian plenipotentiaries. The administration of the exchange was entrusted to a mixed commission of Greek, Bulgarian, and neutral members, and the whole operation was completed by 1930.

The essential feature of the Greco-Bulgarian convention was the voluntary character of the reciprocal emigration established by the agreement. But the convention recognized only the right of the respective national minorities to emigrate, and their freedom to exercise this right or not. No provision was made to prevent the application of pressure on national minorities to emigrate. The free and voluntary character of the emigration was, one might say, *nudum jus*. In practice, as long as no compulsion was imposed and the Greek and Bulgarian minorities were really free to register for emigration or not, the number of

applicants was insignificant, but, early in 1923, when direct and indirect pressures were applied by the Greek and Bulgarian governments, the number of declarations for emigration rose abruptly.

Only the transfer of the Greek minority from Bulgaria can be considered as having been completed. Some 30,000 Greeks left Bulgarian soil under the provisions of the Neuilly Convention, and at the end of 1926, there were only 10,564 left in Bulgaria. The results of the Bulgarian transfer from Greece were quite different. Although only scattered groups of Bulgarians remained in eastern Macedonia and practically none in western Thrace, there were still sizable Bulgarian villages in western and central Macedonia. The Greek census of 1928 numbered 82,000 Bulgarians. Thus the 'racial adjustment' between Greece and Bulgaria proved to be unilateral. The Greek minority in Bulgaria, never very numerous or very troublesome, disappeared almost entirely, but of the much larger and intransigent Bulgarian minority in Greece almost 60 per cent remained, and almost half of the earlier Bulgarian emigrants abstained from relinquishing their claims to the property left behind in Greece.¹⁸

The emigrants were permitted to take with them, or to have shipped, movable property of all kinds, free of customs duty. Real property could be disposed of either by the emigrants themselves within a specified period, or liquidated by the mixed commission if no such disposition was made.

The number of Bulgarian properties to be liquidated in Greece was 32,693; of these 31,114 were settled by the end of 1929. Greek properties in Bulgaria numbered 15,861; by the end of 1929, 15,180 had been liquidated. The value of the property left in Greece by the Bulgarian emigrants was estimated by the mixed commission at 22 million dollars; the value of Greek

¹⁸ 53,000 Bulgarians left Greece between 1923 and 1928; of the 70,000 who emigrated before the Neuilly Convention came into effect, 39,000 availed themselves of the right to liquidate their property in Greece through the agency of the mixed commission.

properties in Bulgaria was put at 15 million dollars. As a rule, each emigrant received 10 per cent of the amount due him in cash. For such payments the mixed commission issued checks in dollars on the national bank of the country in which the property was located, these checks to be cashed in the currency of the other country at the exchange rate prevailing on the day of presentation. The banks received the funds for these payments from their respective governments. As it worked out, the payments were often very much delayed.

The remaining 90 per cent of the amounts owed to the emigrants were paid in 6 per cent negotiable public bonds, redeemable within 12 years from 1 January 1928. But as early as 1939, the market value of the Bulgarian bonds dwindled to about 50 per cent, and that of the Greek bonds to about 72 per cent of their nominal value. Thus the emigrants received only a part of the sums to which they were entitled.

The settlement of the exchanged Greeks and Bulgarians in their new homelands presented a difficult problem. Re-establishment of 30,000 Greeks from Bulgaria was only a small part of the tremendous resettlement task that involved a million Greek refugees from Turkey, and will therefore be considered in connection with the Greco-Turkish exchange of minorities. The 123,000 Bulgarian emigrants from Greece also constituted only a part of the refugee problem in Bulgaria, which involved more than 200,000 persons, but they comprised the largest sector, and furthermore, they were strongly represented among the 36 per cent of all refugees who arrived in 1923 and 1924 and were in dire need of relief.¹⁴

In May 1926 Bulgaria advised the League of Nations that the country could not cope with a refugee problem of such dimensions and requested that a foreign loan be granted under the auspices of the League for the establishment of the refugees. The Council of the League agreed, and a 2.5 million-pound Refugee

¹⁴ Wurfbain, *op. cit.* p. 105.

Settlement Loan was floated simultaneously in London and New York in December 1926 with great success. The Council also appointed a commissioner to head the settlement proceedings.

Problems of land distribution and reclamation, and of providing housing, agricultural equipment, livestock, seed, and other occupational gear were numerous and complex, but they were finally solved by the end of 1930. More than half the refugees were settled in the district of Burgas near the Black Sea coast. The remainder were accommodated in the north along the Danube, in the Deli Orman region of the northeast where water supply schemes and the evacuation of the former Turkish inhabitants made settlement possible, in the Plovdiv and Arda basins of the south central part of the country, and in the Struma Valley.

IV

The most important and best known of all population transfers in modern history is the compulsory exchange effected by Greece and Turkey between 1923 and 1933 under the Convention of Lausanne (30 January 1923). This convention was the outgrowth of the tragic constellation of events after the debacle of the Greek invasion troops in Turkish Asia Minor in September 1922, when the whole Greek army collapsed and the soldiers ran for their lives, followed by the indigenous Greek population with the Turkish army close on their heels. International co-operation was required to save the lives of those who reached the seacoast, and Mediterranean ships of several nations were ordered to change course and put into Smyrna, where most of the refugees were concentrated.¹⁵

The obvious destination for the refugees was Greece. Thus, nearly a million destitute persons poured into a defeated country, which had already received more than 150,000 refugees from Asia Minor before September 1924, and some 118,000 others

¹⁵ Allen, *Come Over to Macedonia*, p. 19.

from Bulgaria, Russia, Albania, Yugoslavia, and the Dodecanese.

The actual presence of this mass of refugees in Greece was the determining factor for the conclusion of the Lausanne Convention. Although the official title of this document read, 'Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Population,' this corresponds imperfectly with the actual content and application of the agreement. The accord did not provide for the reciprocal and large-scale transfer of human masses under stated terms. In so far as the Greek phase of the 'exchange' was concerned, the overwhelming majority of the surviving Greek population in Turkish Asia Minor had 'transferred' itself to Greece several months before the convention was concluded. With regard to these evacuees, the convention provided only for the settlement of questions connected with the liquidation of the property they left behind. The number of Greeks actually transferred to Greece after the conclusion and under the provisions of the convention between 1923 and 1926 was less than one-sixth of the total number of Greek refugees from Turkish Asia Minor. They were the ones who had not managed to escape in 1922, and their transfer must be considered merely a belated additional operation automatically resulting from the Greco-Turkish agreement not to repatriate the million Greeks already in Greece.

It must be clearly understood that the problem posed for the states vitally concerned—Greece and Turkey—as well as for the League of Nations was not that of an exchange of populations, either voluntary or compulsory, between the two countries. It was, rather, whether the million refugees already in Greece should be permitted or encouraged to return to the Turkish areas from which they had escaped.¹⁸

The Lausanne Convention answered the question negatively, a solution that has been repeatedly and severely criticized. But the

¹⁸ This solution was advocated by G. G. Tenekides, 'Le statut des minorités et l'échange obligatoire des populations Greco-Turques,' in *Revue Générale de Droit Internationale Public*, 1924, p. 86.

question itself was largely rhetorical. The new masters of Turkey having definitely made up their minds with regard to the ethnic composition of the Turkish state, the Minister of the Interior in the Kemalist government had categorically declared on 30 September 1922 that his government 'had decided not to allow the further presence of Greeks on Turkish soil.' Their country was to be purely and uniformly Turkish. The strongest and most disturbing minority was composed of the Greeks of Asia Minor and eastern Thrace, where their very presence was a constant inducement to the spread of Greater Greece propaganda and activity. When, as a result of military events, a million Greeks left for their mother country, the Turkish government seized on this 'favorable conjuncture' and decided not to tolerate their repatriation.

This fateful decision led inevitably to three others, which jointly constituted the basis of the Convention of Lausanne. First, since the bulk of the former Greek community in Turkish Asia Minor was to be resettled in Greece, there was neither reason for maintaining in Turkey the weak remnants of this community, nor perhaps even the possibility of so doing. The Turks emphatically demanded their removal; the Greeks could not oppose this demand. Second, in order to resettle more than a million Greek refugees, vast areas of cultivated or arable land had to be made available. There were no such land reserves in Greece. The Greek government, therefore, suggested, as a counterpart to the transfer of the Greeks from Turkey and as the only means of arranging for their settlement in Greece, the transfer of the Moslem minority in Greek Macedonia and Epirus to Turkey. The Kemalist government agreed to this demand.

The third and most violently attacked feature of the convention was the compulsory character of the exchange. Aversion to this compulsory aspect was so great that the initiators and signatories of the convention themselves sought to shift the responsi-

bility for the origin of this idea.¹⁷ Responsibility, however, is beside the point so far as the essence of the problem is concerned. The compulsory aspect of the transfer of the remaining 189,916 Greeks from Turkey and of the 355,635 Turks from Greece was determined neither by cruelty nor intentional disregard of the free will of the persons concerned; it was the inescapable precondition of the success of the whole exchange scheme.¹⁸ The Turks in Greece protested their removal, but without it the settlement of the Greeks would have been almost impossible.

The convention provided for a mixed commission of members representing Greece, Turkey, and the Council of the League of Nations to supervise the exchange and the liquidation of property. The exchange of persons was carried out speedily and successfully. The settlement of property matters proved to be a hard and thankless task. Several years were spent in fruitless attempts to carry out the appraisal work adequately and to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, but the discrepancies between the appraisals made by Turkish and Greek experts ran into millions. Both parties finally concluded that the matter had reached an impasse. Following the advice of the neutral members of the mixed commission the application of the Lausanne Convention was abandoned and all accounts were liquidated in a wholesale fashion.

Resettlement of the exchanged Greeks and Turks was a difficult and complicated undertaking. In Greece, the installation of nearly 1.25 million refugees from Turkey, Bulgaria, and Russia imposed a heavy burden on the resources of the small and war-stricken country, which it was obviously unable to bear alone. International sympathy and aid were enlisted to make possible the humanitarian work of resettlement. An independent body

¹⁷ Sfériades, op. cit. pp. 372-6; Ladas, op. cit. pp. 340-2; *Documents Diplomatiques* . . . , *passim*.

¹⁸ John Hope Simpson, 'The Problems of National Minorities,' in *The Fortnightly*, July 1944, p. 12.

called the Refugee Settlement Commission was set up by the League of Nations. It functioned from November 1923 to January 1931, during which time it performed excellent work. A refugee loan of 10 million pounds was floated in December 1924 in London, New York, and Athens. In January 1928, a second loan of 6.5 million pounds was raised in London and New York, and in 1929 a further loan of 2.5 million pounds was granted to Greece by the United States government.

Primary consideration was given to the problem of installing rural immigrants. Lands for their resettlement were made available by the Greek government, which turned over to the commission vast state and federal properties, farms left by Turkish and Bulgarian transferees (70 per cent of the total), expropriated church property, community holdings, and large estates.¹⁹ Since these were insufficient to meet the need, extensive reclamation of swamps, lakes, and flooded areas was undertaken, and more than 800,000 acres were thus added to the 1.5 million acres provided by the government from the sources cited above.²⁰ Most of the agricultural refugees were established in Greek Macedonia and western Thrace. Others were settled in Crete, Thessaly, Epirus, Euboea, and a few in the Peloponnesus.

The resettlement of the urban dwellers proved to be much less satisfactory. The Greek community of Asia Minor had included a large and prosperous group of bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans for whom the industrial economy of Greece was not equipped to provide work. At first, the Greek government grappled with the problem alone, and the mixed commission did not undertake to aid in this sphere until the beginning of 1925. It then found it necessary to lend financial support for the construction of permanent quarters for the housing of the urban element. It also gave financial aid to certain outstanding arts and

¹⁹ Rodoconachi, *Les finances de la Grèce et l'établissement des réfugiés*, p. 60.

²⁰ Allen, *op. cit.* p. 34.

crafts which utilized the traditional skills of the refugees and which promised an assured return on the loans, namely, the making of carpets, embroideries, silks, pottery, silverware, and enameled articles. Also, with some financial backing, the persons who had been prominent in banking, commerce, shipping, and the liberal professions were enabled to bring to Greece the benefit of their ability and experience, and, in some cases, their capital.

The total number of refugees cared for by the commission by the end of 1927 reached 623,698, or more than half the total number of 1,221,849 refugees in Greece. Apart from this, another 250,000 persons were rehabilitated by the Greek government independently of the commission, and many settled through their own efforts. At the end of 1928, some 8,000 agricultural families and 20,000 urban families were still awaiting resettlement.²¹ The total cost of the settlement was considerable. In addition to the 19 million pounds provided by the loans contracted abroad, the Greek government spent some 7.4 million drachmas obtained through national loans. The average total cost of resettlement was between 70 and 80 pounds per family.²²

The settlement of the 355,635 Turks who went to Turkey under the terms of the Lausanne Convention apparently presented no sizable difficulties. They left Greece in a more or less orderly manner, taking with them their movable property. In order to avoid mortgaging the future of the nation to international capital, the Turkish government decided not to seek foreign financial aid in settling these emigrants. At the same time, the government was short of funds and could be of no great help to the refugees. Much suffering resulted from what was financially sound government policy.

As a rule, the Moslem emigrants from Greece were installed in villages and properties left by the Greeks. Land was abundant and every new settler was granted sufficient space to insure his

²¹ Ibid. p. 35.

²² Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, pp. 18-19.

livelihood. The government managed to provide agricultural equipment and seed for the farms, and small capital loans for artisans, but its total expenditures amounted to less than one-twentieth of the expense incurred by the Greek government in settling three times as many refugees. The resettlers' debts to the state were repayable in installments over a 20-year period, the value of each repatriate's property in Greece being deductible from his debt.

The total number of Turkish immigrants from Greece, settled in Turkey between 1921 and 1928 and including several thousand who left Greece on their own initiative, may be estimated at 400,000. They were settled mainly in eastern Thrace, along the Aegean coast and on the shores of the Sea of Marmara.

This Greco-Turkish exchange of minorities, although not the first operation of its kind, caught the imagination of the world with special force. It was recommended as an instructive precedent for the solution of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine by the British Royal Commission in 1937. And it was referred to expressly as the pattern for the German-Italian agreement on the transfer of the German minority from the South Tyrol, which inaugurated the far-reaching transfer program of the Third Reich.²⁸

V

Even so cursory a review of the major population transfers carried out in Europe between 1913 and 1939 serves to suggest some of the major considerations governing the application of this drastic but potentially effective method of solving the minorities problem. The few transfer precedents discussed indicate that once it has become clear that only such extreme measures will eradicate an intolerable situation, it is then incumbent

²⁸ Between 1933 and 1940 Turkey pursued a definite program of repatriation involving the transfer of Turks from Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and other areas. These transfers are discussed in some detail in Appendix II.

on the countries involved to make a formal agreement that will cover, in so far as possible, the manifold contingencies of the particular transfer envisioned. Granted that, for the most part, the treaties pertaining to the transfer operations outlined above merely accorded formal recognition to population shifts that had already taken place. This circumstance in no way alters or obscures the essential points to be covered by any plan for the exchange of populations, whether it be *ex post facto* or carefully preconceived.

A primary factor in any transfer operation is whether the persons to be transferred shall have any option in the matter. In this connection, should the transfer be projected as a purely voluntary action on the part of the individuals concerned, there arises the problem of guarding against the imposition of direct or indirect pressures on these persons. The practical aspects of the transportation of the evacuees, the rulings on what property and funds they may take with them, and the delimitation of the period during which the transfer is to take place are other initial provisions that require definition.

A major problem is posed by the reception of the transferees, their immediate housing, and temporary maintenance. But even more complex and of greater importance is the question of their permanent economic resettlement, which has to be considered in the light of both the economic structure of the country of resettlement and the previous occupational status of the evacuees. Economic resettlement also implies the necessity for an exchange of persons so that room for each incoming group can be made by the removal of its counterpart. Economic integration of the new elements further implies a financial burden on the state, and this in turn is linked to the whole question of property settlements. There is the matter of compensating each evacuee for the property he abandons, not only in the interests of simple justice but also as a means of establishing his status as a self-supporting individual in the new country. Such compen-

sation, however, involves an extremely intricate procedure of appraisal, and a careful adjustment between the currencies and standards of value of the contracting countries. However equitable these property settlements may be, a certain time lag is inevitable, and thus the state receiving the evacuees may have to make long-term loans, if not outright gifts, an obligation which may require international aid for its fulfilment.

The following chapters of this study are concerned not only with all the above-mentioned aspects of the population transfers that occurred during World War II, but also with the many other conditions generated by the political and military developments of the period. The major emphasis of this study is accorded the transfers conducted by Germany. Germans comprised the largest and most widely distributed ethnic minority in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. But more important than that, the transfer policy articulated and implemented by the Third Reich was by far the most extensive and highly organized program in the whole field of population transfers. Therefore, the background and general structure of this policy are outlined in an introductory chapter, while the separate transfers are described in great detail. Since the resettlement of the Germans in the German-incorporated Polish provinces is the only experiment of its kind that was carefully planned in advance and on which considerable information was obtainable, a special section is devoted to its study. The various transfer operations conducted by other countries are treated in subsequent chapters. The concluding portion of the book summarizes the results of all experience to date in the field of European population transfers, and offers certain recommendations for the use of what must inevitably prove to be an instrument of the greatest importance in eliminating the most explosive danger spots in Europe and in securing the future peace of the Continent and the welfare of its peoples.

PART II

TRANSFER OF GERMAN MINORITIES

II

German Reich Policy on German Minorities Abroad

I

GERMAN colonization, which resulted in the implanting of numerous German folk groups among other European nationalities, has a long history marked by two distinct phases of development. The first wave of migration from Germany started in the eleventh century, reached its crest in the fourteenth, and subsided a century later in the face of a Slavonic onslaught. A new mass movement started in the sixteenth century, and lasted until the nineteenth, when German emigration turned overseas.¹ Geographically, these two migrations moved in three principal directions: to the northeast toward the Baltic Sea; to the east toward the Warthe region and the middle course of the Vistula, toward the Sudetes and the Carpathians; and to the southeast toward the Danube basin and the Balkan mountain country. In the east, German colonization knew no limits; in the south it was, for the most part, checked by the Alps, and in the north by the sea. Nations of high culture and strongly developed state organization barred any substantial German expansion westward. Both colonization waves left tangible traces in the form of numerous German minority groups in the areas now known as Poland, the Baltic countries, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, southern Ukraine and the Volga region.

Prior to its union in 1871 and formation of the Second Reich,

¹ Walter Vogel, 'Deutsche und entdeutsche Städte in Ost- und Südeuropa,' in *Volk unter Völkern*.

Germany showed little interest in *Auslandsdeutschtum* (Germans abroad). Similarly, the Germany of the post-Bismarck period directed all its efforts toward consolidation of national unity, and during the first decades of its existence the Second Reich considered the terms *Deutsche* (German) and *Reichsdeutsche* (Reich German) virtually synonymous. It is true that in 1908 the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA) (League for Germanism in Foreign Countries) was created, but its leadership claimed a purely cultural field of activity,² and this was largely accurate. In fact, the organization was originally named (1883) *Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein* (Universal German School League).

The Reich was so little concerned with the fate of German minorities in foreign countries before World War I that Emperor William II was even prepared to disavow them publicly if the interests of higher policy seemed to demand it. It is reported by the National Socialist author, Karl C. von Loesch, that the Emperor, who was anxious to please the Hungarian ruling classes, 'stated at Ofener Burg [Budapest], to the greatest satisfaction of the *Magnats* who came there, that the German Reich was not interested in the fate of the Hungarian Swabes.'³ Indeed, in certain influential political circles the opinion prevailed that it would not be to Germany's advantage to lend active support to its minorities abroad. None other than Heinrich Class, president of the nationalistic *Alldeutsche Verband* and subsequently editor of the Berlin *Deutsche Zeitung*, writing under the pseudonym of Daniel Frymann, warned the Baltic Germans in Russia that Germany could not help them, and he even went so far as to envision the Hitlerite policy of repatriation of German minorities from abroad.⁴

² Schäfer, *Sinn und Wesen des V.D.A.*, pp. 26-7.

³ Loesch, 'Der Sieg des Volksgedanken,' in *Volk und Reich*, December 1940, p. 798.

⁴ Frymann, *Wenn ich Kaiser wäre*, pp. 14, 140, 141, 190.

II

World War I, however, placed before the Reich the problem of German minorities abroad as a national and political consideration of primary importance. According to Hans Winkler, Director of the *Institut für Minderheitenstatistik* of Vienna University, and Max Hildebert Böhm of the *Institut für Grenz- und Auslandsstudien* in Berlin, 9,130,000 Germans acquired minority status as a result of the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain and of the events that followed the conclusion of the peace.⁵ These they grouped as follows:

France (Alsace and Lorraine)	1,700,000	Hungary	550,000
Belgium	150,000	Italy	250,000
Denmark	60,000	Romania	800,000
Poland	1,200,000	Yugoslavia	700,000
Lithuania	120,000	Latvia	70,000
Czechoslovakia	3,500,000	Estonia	30,000

The 1 million to 1.5 million Germans in Soviet Russia, 2.7 million in Switzerland, 240,000 in Luxembourg, and 100,000 in the Netherlands are not included in this total of 'lost Germans.'⁶

The degree of interest aroused in the Weimar Republic by different sectors of this heterogeneous mass of the *Auslandsdeutschtum* varied widely. Those in countries bound by international accords on the protection of minorities evoked intense concern, as did the inhabitants of Danzig, Memel, and the South Tyrol, while the 'lost Germans' of Alsace, Lorraine, Eupen,

⁵ Winkler, *Statistisches Handbuch für das gesamte Deutschtum*; Böhm, 'Volkszerreissung und Minderheitennot,' in Loesch and Böhm, eds., *Grenzdeutschland seit Versailles*, p. 423. See also Martel, *The Eastern Frontiers of Germany*; König, *Der Kampf um die deutsche Grenze in Versailles*.

⁶ These figures, which were all supplied by German sources, do not necessarily correspond to the facts. Even German sources give different and contradictory estimates of the number of Germans in various countries and often include the entire population of former German territories in their figures as 'lost Germans.'

and Malmédy were apparently ignored. Nor was anything said about the Germans in Soviet Russia, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. The government likewise showed no interest in the smaller German groups in the Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Finland, and Sweden. They were not considered genuine folk groups that merited recognition and treatment as national minorities.

The Weimar Republic limited its official activity in the interests of *Auslandsdeutschtum* to: first, the defense of the minority rights of German folk groups in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—rights that in these countries were guaranteed by international treaties; second, to the improvement of the procedure for treating minority questions and petitions before the League of Nations; third, to the broadening of the principle of international defense of national minority rights and extension of international control to those countries which had not assumed any obligations in that respect. The Germans, however, were silent on the possibility of the extension of those international controls to Germany as well.

The German campaign was conducted in all international forums open to Germany.⁷ We cannot dwell at length on the extremely interesting and varied phases of this political activity, which was conducted with great skill and persistence. Actually, the German efforts did not produce any important positive results. The Council of the League of Nations rejected most of the demands presented to it; those taken into consideration suffered

⁷ Among these were the Union Interparlementaire (*Commission des questions ethniques et coloniales*), Union Internationale des Associations pour la Société des Nations (*Commission spéciale sur les minorités de race, de langue et de religion*), International Law Association, Congrès des Groupes Nationaux Organisés des États Européens, Joint Research Committee on Minority Problems of Friends' Council for International Service and Friends' Peace Committee, and finally, after 10 September 1926, the League of Nations itself.

substantial changes which stripped them of the greater part of their importance.

The lack of concrete results, however, did not discourage the leaders of German policy. The true goal of their campaign in the international arena was to insure that the painful problem of 'lost Germans' would not be forgotten, to stir it up again and again, to keep it in the foreground of international attention. Defeated and disarmed, Germany fully realized that she would be unable for some time to obtain a revision of the Versailles frontiers by force. Her official representatives therefore reiterated their acceptance of the European *status quo* and their indifference to irredentist aims or plans. But Germany never ceased to hope that a favorable juncture might result in reunion with the brethren abroad who had been torn away by force. To this end she encouraged and dramatized all conflicts and complications that arose between minorities and the countries of their residence. In Geneva, she not only played the role of protector of German folk groups, but also professed to champion the rights of all oppressed minorities.⁸

There were undoubtedly sound reasons for some of the dissatisfaction of both German and non-German minorities in most of the states of postwar Europe. The governments of Poland, Hungary, Romania, Italy, and even Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were not without fault, and in several cases they sinned heavily against the letter and the spirit of the international treaties for the protection of minorities. It is, however, beyond any doubt that influential German groups often stirred up particular conflicts, fanning the flames of old animosities and en-

⁸ Of the 319 petitions presented by 18 minorities to the League of Nations between 1920 and 1929, 60 came from German groups. By 1938, out of the total of approximately 500 petitions submitted, 131 originated in German minority groups. See Herbert von Truhart, *Die Völkerbundpetitionen und ihre Behandlung*, p. 8, and 'Schlussbilanz der deutschen Beschwerden in Genf,' in *Nation und Staat*, July-August 1938, p. 611.

couraging the disgruntled minorities to reject any overtures for a working compromise.

This policy tended to foster resentment among German political units in all countries and to make them feel that all attempts to obtain satisfaction through the ordinary legal channels of international action were doomed in advance. For some time, certain German minority groups remained impervious to these educational methods of the Second Reich; Germans in Estonia and Latvia and the majority of those in Czechoslovakia were on the whole more or less satisfied with their lot. On the other hand, the tactics of the Weimar government produced important results among Germans in Poland and in Memel, and among some in Czechoslovakia. It was in these latter groups that the Third Reich found a fertile field for its policies.

III

When Adolf Hitler became Chancellor on 30 January 1933, the program of the National Socialist party with its emphasis on racialism and its frank encouragement of irredentist movements became the official policy of the Third Reich. The first article of this program proclaimed: 'We demand the union of all Germans in order to form a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of the self-determination enjoyed by nations.'⁹ 'This article has never been altered. Hitler has always preached the gospel of Pan-Germanism—the doctrine that every man of German race, whatever the political vicissitudes of the moment, must some day or other come back again to the German nation.'¹⁰ On the opening page of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler said explicitly that 'common blood must belong to a common Reich.' And with reference to colonies he stated that 'the German people has no moral right to

⁹ Feder, *The Program of the Party of Hitler*, p. 18.

¹⁰ Roberts, *The House that Hitler Built*, p. 314.

take part in colonial politics' until 'the boundaries of the Reich include the last German.'¹¹

Over a period of many years National Socialist propaganda had insistently criticized all attempts on the part of the Weimar Republic to obtain an adequate solution of the problem of *Auslandsdeutschtum* through the League of Nations or international bodies connected with it. Nevertheless, National Socialist policy apparently had no intention of discarding at the outset that same international protection of minorities which it criticized and despised. In his Reichstag speech of 23 March 1933, Hitler declared, 'The German government is determined to give its full protection to the internationally guaranteed rights of German minorities, using all means at its disposal.'

Germany retained that legalistic position, however, for only a short time. On 14 October 1933 it announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations, thus considerably narrowing the field of possible influence for legal international action. This step also closed to the Reich the doors of the *Union Internationale des Associations pour la Société des Nations* (Union of the League of Nations Societies), but at the same time the German position was strengthened in the *Congrès des Groupes Nationaux Organisés des États Européens*, which soon became an open agent of the Reich and various irredentist tendencies.

Meanwhile, the policy of total nationalism adopted by the Reich, with its resultant brutal oppression of minorities within Germany, had a decidedly unfavorable effect on the position of German minorities in other countries.¹² Even as early as 1932, during a convention of the *Verband der Deutschen Volksgruppen* (Union of German Folk Groups), Dr. Paul Schiemann, then leader of the German minority in Latvia, had spoken of the

¹¹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, New York, 1939, p. 19.

¹² *Kulturwehr*, organ of the national minorities in Germany, devoted three special issues to a bare enumeration of the infraction of Polish minority rights (August-October 1934, January-March 1935, April-December 1936).

nationalistic wave sweeping over different countries and of the harm it had caused the German minorities, and had emphasized that 'the basic concept upon which was founded our struggle for our rights is being slowly pulled away from underneath our feet by our own compatriots.'¹³

And now with the increased intensity of the German domestic program of persecution, the position of German minorities abroad abruptly worsened. The National Socialist government policies afforded the governments of other countries a peculiar moral justification for a corresponding treatment of German minorities in their own territories whom they accused of disloyalty because of their growing National Socialist sympathies. And by withdrawing from the League of Nations and ridiculing its system of international protection of minorities, the Third Reich had to a great extent deprived the German minority groups of the chance to appeal to the international guarantor of their rights.

This situation was in some measure unavoidable. National Socialist Germany was not yet able to substitute the right of force for the force of right which it had discarded. During this initial period Germany was still relatively weak and isolated, surrounded by an atmosphere of open hostility.

These early 'preparatory' years of the Third Reich were not, however, merely a period of passive waiting on the part of the Nazi regime. National minorities in the various European states, and more especially German minorities, had become an organic and dynamic element in the foreign policy of the Reich. F. Elwin Jones, who characterized this 'attack from within' as 'the modern technique of aggression,' emphasized with reason that Berlin (and later also Rome) did 'not rely only on its own nationals for the success of its expansionist campaign. There are few European countries without a racial minority and few racial minorities without a grievance, real or imaginary. It was the deliberate

¹³ *Nation und Staat*, November 1932, p. 131.

policy of the Axis to stimulate these grievances and to support minority claims in all countries which stand in the way of its expansion.' ¹⁴ Slovaks, Croats, Ukrainians, Flemings, Bretons—all played their role in the destructive plans of the Reich, but the central role was played by the German minorities.

The gigantic propaganda machinery of the Reich operated in every country where German minorities were to be found, and became an active and immediate political force in Europe. The colonies of Germans abroad were regarded as missionaries for the expansion of Germany. No pains were spared to urge Germans in foreign countries, whether they had acquired another nationality or not, to regard themselves as primarily German. The significance of this careful groundwork manifested itself all too clearly in the swift succession of political and military *coups* which Germany initiated in 1938.

IV

Addressing the Reichstag on 20 February 1938, Hitler declared: 'There are more than 10 million Germans in states adjoining Germany which before 1866 were attached to the bulk of the German Nation by a national link. . . Present-day Germany will know how to guard its more restricted interests. To these interests of the German Reich belong also the protection of those German peoples who are not in a position to secure along our frontiers their political and philosophical freedom by their own efforts.' ¹⁵

Action followed almost immediately. On 12 March, Austria with a population of 6,754,000 was occupied by the German armies and incorporated into the Reich. But since Hitler had spoken of 10 million Germans it was obvious that the Reich would go further afield. Just half a year later, at the Nāzi Con-

¹⁴ Jones, *The Attack from Within*, p. 120.

¹⁵ Hitler, *My New Order*, pp. 443-4.

gress in Nuremberg on 12 September, Hitler vehemently repeated earlier accusations against the Czechoslovakian government of oppressing the German minority, and declared that 'if these tortured creatures cannot obtain rights and assistance by themselves, they will get both from us.'¹⁶

Under the threat of armed intervention on the part of the Reich, the tripartite conference at Munich turned over to Germany on 28 September 1938 the Sudeten regions of Czechoslovakia with a population of 3,576,779, among whom Germans numbered 2,822,899.¹⁷ The year 1939 witnessed further achievement of the same nature. On 15 March the armies of the Reich occupied the remaining part of Czechoslovakia with its 377,830 Germans, and a week later, on 22 March, they seized Memel and the 70,000 to 80,000 Germans resident there. A total of about 10 million Germans¹⁸ were thus incorporated into or 'returned' to the Reich.

Such successes could only serve to encourage the Reich leaders in their activist enterprises. Directly or through scholarly prophets of this new *Volkspolitik*, they openly and unequivocally proclaimed the Third Reich not only a national and spiritual center but also a national-political protector and defender of all Germans in the entire world. Following the annexation of Austria, Field Marshal Goering stated: 'Germany is unwilling to interfere and will not interfere with the situation in a foreign country. But it must be clearly understood that the German Reich considers itself in every respect as a protector and a defender of all Germans, even those outside the borders of the Reich.'¹⁹

A year later, after the Sudeten regions had already been annexed by the Reich, Gustav Adolf Walz, a professor at Cologne University, delivered at a conference held to celebrate the

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 507.

¹⁷ *Central European Observer*, 16 December 1938, p. 392.

¹⁸ *Der Deutsche im Osten*, March 1939.

¹⁹ *Der Volksdeutsche*, 1 March 1938.

twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Institut für Politik und Internationales Recht* (20 March-1 April 1939) an obviously government-inspired speech entitled, 'New Bases of the National Group Law.' In this he stated, 'Even after the Great German Reich is created, millions of *Volksdeutsche* [racial Germans] will still live in foreign countries.'²⁰ And he comforted himself only with the prophecy that the 'Geneva system of collective intervention will be supplanted by the natural right of trustee vested in the mother country. The Führer and Chancellor of the Reich has proclaimed that right on behalf of the German Reich and in the interest of the German folk groups. Thus the Reich has assumed charge of this basic national principle and has become the responsible guardian of a new fundamental concept of international law.'²¹

Austria and the Sudeten, Bohemia and Moravia and Memel had been seized without a single shot. Eager to profit by the favorable political situation, Hitler next directed his attention to Danzig and the Polish Corridor, a move which had long been expected. Even the Weimar Republic had never regarded the settlement of Germany's frontiers with Poland as anything more than provisional. The National Socialist government, which had other and more immediate problems to solve, on 26 January 1934 entered into a non-aggression pact with Poland postponing for ten years the settlement of the frontier question. Commenting at the time, the *Manchester Guardian* emphasized that the pact 'did not mean the recognition by Germany of the permanent character of those frontiers.'²² On 5 November 1937 the German and Polish governments signed a common statement of policy with regard to minorities, emphasizing their mutual conviction that 'the treatment of the minorities is of great importance for the further development of the relations of good neighborhood

²⁰ Walz, *Neue Grundlagen des Volksgruppenrechts*, p. 105/35.

²¹ Ibid. p. 104/34.

²² *Manchester Guardian*, 31 January 1934.

between Germany and Poland' and that the policy with regard to minorities in the two countries must be based upon 'a realization that the other country acts upon the same grounds.' The basic principles of this statement were inadmissibility of a forced assimilation and discrimination in professional and economic fields, and the insistence on the right of cultural and economic association, and free use of the native tongue in school and church.²³

The statement of 5 November remained, however, nothing more 'than a pious aspiration of questionable sincerity,'²⁴—as Elizabeth Wiskemann put it—and on 28 April 1939, Hitler in his Reichstag speech denounced the pact of 1934. After diplomatic negotiations, which lasted almost the entire month of August, the armies of the Reich crossed the Polish border on 1 September and Soviet armies invaded from the east sixteen days later. The Polish armies were defeated after only seventeen days of resistance. A week before the invasion, a non-aggression pact had been signed by the Reich and the Soviet Union, and on 28 September the two powers concluded an agreement delimiting the frontier of 'mutual imperial interests.' The part assigned to the Reich included 72,000 square miles with a German population of about 700,000. Thus, at this point, the Reich had recovered about 11 million 'lost Germans.'

v

More than 2 million Germans still remained beyond the borders of the Reich in Northeastern and Southeastern Europe, existing as minority groups in a number of states. Both belligerent and neutral countries therefore anticipated with much inter-

²³ 'Deutsch-Polnische Minderheitenerklärung,' in *Nation und Staat*, November 1937, pp. 151-2.

²⁴ Wiskemann, *Prologue to War*, p. 191.

est and some anxiety the next moves of the Reich with regard to these groups.

On 6 October, eight days after the conclusion of the German-Soviet agreement on Poland, Hitler delivered to the Reichstag a long speech which contained the following pronouncement:

The East and South of Europe is to a large extent filled with splinters of the German nationality, whose existence they cannot maintain.

In their very existence lies the reason and cause for continual international disturbances. In this age of the principle of nationalities and of racial ideals, it is Utopian to believe that members of a highly developed people can be assimilated without trouble.

It is, therefore, essential for a far-sighted ordering of the life of Europe that a resettlement should be undertaken here so as to remove at least part of the material for a European conflict.

Germany and the Union of Soviet Republics have come to an agreement to support each other in this matter.²⁵

Only two days after this speech, the ministers of the Reich in Riga and Tallinn opened negotiations with the governments of Latvia and Estonia for the transfer of German minority groups to the Reich, and on 15 and 30 October treaties were concluded with each country respectively. On 21 October at Rome, a treaty was concluded with Italy regarding the evacuation of Germans from the South Tyrol. On 3 November in Moscow, Germany signed a treaty with the Soviet Union on the evacuation of Germans from the Polish provinces turned over to the Soviet Union (eastern Galicia, Wolhynia, and the district of Narew). Nearly a year later, on 5 September 1940, the Reich and the Soviet Union made a treaty regarding evacuation of Germans from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which had passed under Soviet sovereignty, and on 22 October 1940 Germany concluded

²⁵ Quoted from the 'authorized English translation' in *Facts in Review*, 14 October 1939.

a treaty with the Romanian government on the evacuation of German minority groups from Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja, which had remained part of the Romanian state. (The southern part of Dobruja had been ceded to Bulgaria.) Finally, a treaty between the Reich and the Soviet Union, concluded on 10 January 1941, settled the question of Germans in Lithuania and of those Germans in Latvia and in Estonia who had remained there after the evacuation of 1939. (These three Baltic states had been incorporated into the Soviet Union during the summer of 1940.)

The specific motives and circumstances that in each case led to the evacuation of German minority groups from a country or a province are fully dealt with in later portions of the book. The implications of Hitler's 6 October speech, however, must be considered in the broader context of German policy as a whole. The speech was interpreted by different political circles of the Old and New World as meaning a sudden abandonment of the traditional policy of the Reich with regard to *Auslandsdeutschtum*, or a general and radical revision of its objectives. In the light of the facts that preceded the speech and in view of later developments, there would seem to have been little basis for either of these interpretations.

The element of suddenness is totally absent from the policy announced by Hitler. In the first place, it is known that the Reich had watched attentively the carefully conceived repatriation policy of Kemalist Turkey, which from 1933 conducted a systematic evacuation of Turkish minorities from Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia.²⁰ Furthermore, Article 7 of the Munich agreement of 1938 speaks in so many words of 'transfer of population' in the territories ceded by Czechoslovakia to the Reich, although the transfer was not to be organized by the states.

²⁰ Peter Schischkoff and Heinz Wilsdorf, 'Die zwischenstaatliche Lenkung der Türkenwanderung,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, September 1938, pp. 758-64.

'There will be a right of option into and out of the transferred territories, the option to be exercised within six months from the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating the transfer of population, and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfer.'²⁷

On 20 November 1938, Germany and Czechoslovakia concluded a treaty on questions of citizenship and option²⁸ that authorized the government of the Reich to require all persons of non-German ethnic nationality who had settled in the newly acquired territory after 10 January 1910 to leave the Reich within three months. A similar right was granted to the government of Czechoslovakia with regard to persons of German ethnic nationality who had settled in its territory after 10 January 1910. Persons of non-German nationality were authorized to opt for Czechoslovak citizenship before 29 March 1939, while persons of German nationality were authorized to opt for the citizenship of the Reich in the same period. All those who, in accordance with the treaty provisions, would have to change their residence were authorized to take away their movable property free of duty. The treaty contains no mention of immovable property.

One further bit of evidence that the new German policy was not suddenly formulated lies in the fact that although the treaty with Italy on evacuation of the German population from the South Tyrol was officially concluded fifteen days after Hitler's speech, a preliminary agreement on this subject had been reached four months prior to it, on 23 June 1939.²⁹

As for the interpretation of Hitler's speech as marking a radical change in the objectives of Reich policy with regard to German minorities outside its borders, there was still less basis.

²⁷ The full text of the agreement appears in Langsam, *The World Since 1914*, pp. 860-61.

²⁸ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1938, II, p. 893.

²⁹ Georg Runge, 'Zur Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen,' in *Nation und Staat*, January 1940, p. 118.

It is true that German political literature spared no effort to produce precisely this impression. In a detailed and officially inspired article on the subject, Dr. W. Gradmann emphatically declared that the speech, which 'was a work of genius in its simplicity, clearness and importance, like all great ideas of German history,' had 'directed, with a single stroke, the entire *Volkstum* policy to a new path. . . Up to that point, the basic principle had been to strengthen German minority groups and to prevent their weakening. Migrations of any kind were discouraged and individual departures were considered virtually treason to the folk groups. Now, however, folk groups will have to migrate.'⁸⁰

Consciously or unwittingly supporting the Reich propagandists, both the German and foreign press regarded Hitler's speech as a kind of *rappel général*, if not of all 13 million Germans scattered through 23 European countries, at least of some 2 million located in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. In the first months after the outbreak of the war, it was accepted as a matter of course in all capitals of Europe that Hitler had decided to return to the Reich not only the German minority groups of the eastern Polish provinces acquired by the Soviet Union and of the Baltic states which had become a Soviet sphere of influence, but also the 750,000 Germans of Romania, 500,000 in Hungary, 500,000 in Yugoslavia, and 160,000 in Slovakia. Mention was made of the impending evacuation of small German groups from Finland, Denmark, and even from Turkey. Calculations on the time such evacuations would require varied widely; on 29 October 1939 the Berlin correspondent of the Belgrade daily *Politika* quoted an official German source to the effect that 'the repatriation of Germans from Southeastern Europe will take from fifty to one hundred years.'⁸¹ Far-reaching speculation was also rife concerning the consequences such general evacuation would have both for the Reich and for the countries affected.

⁸⁰ Gradmann, 'Die umgesiedelten deutschen Volksgruppen,' in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, May 1941, p. 277.

⁸¹ *New York Times*, 30 October 1939.

But out of this haze of conjecture emerged the realization that the new repatriation policy proclaimed by the Führer was far less drastic than it appeared at first glance.³² It would seem that the reason for this lay not in the fact that the leaders of the Reich considered the task of a simultaneous transfer of 2 million people beyond their capacity, but rather that such universal evacuation would be undesirable from the point of view of Reich policy.

The Reich had no intention of abandoning all the positions that German minorities had held for centuries as outposts of the homeland. Hitler had agreed to evacuate only those German folk groups which placed before the Reich two equally unacceptable alternatives. Germany had either to face the prospect of the economic expropriation of the Germans (in the Polish and Romanian provinces and the Baltic states incorporated into the Soviet Union) and the loss of their former national-economic status (in the South Tyrol) or to support them with the entire international political power of the Reich and thereby risk serious conflicts with the Soviet Union and with Italy at a time when all efforts were being made to avoid such conflicts. To leave these German minorities to their own fate meant to abandon the pretence of leadership and protection of all Germans in the entire world. To risk a clash with an ally (Italy) or a partner (Soviet Russia) was sheer madness. Thus the Reich decided to order the evacuation of these dangerous positions.

Germany's decision to transfer her minorities from areas that fell within the Soviet sphere of influence can be fully understood only in the light of the German-Soviet accords of 23 August and 28 September 1939, and the 22-month period of co-operation

³² Hans Krieg, authorized German historiographer of the evacuation from the Baltic states, asserted as late as 1940 that 'the scope of the entire evacuation operation had been from the very beginning limited to Estonia and Latvia, to those Germans who lived in the eastern regions of the former Poland and which became part of the sphere of interests of the Soviets, and to *Volksdeutschen* in Northern Italy.' See *Baltischer Aufbruch zum deutschen Osten*, p. 26.

which followed. These treaties, which delimited the German and Soviet spheres of interest in the Baltic states and provided for the liquidation and partition of Poland, brought into focus the problem of the stability of the territorial concessions made by the Reich in favor of the Soviet Union. A considerable number of Germans lived in the areas ceded to the Soviet or forming part of its sphere of influence. The Soviets, wholly familiar with the role of German minorities in Reich international politics, were not eager to keep these minorities and thus supply a pretext for German intervention in the territories newly under her control. An immediate and total evacuation of Germans from these areas must have seemed to the Soviet Union the most practical way to eliminate this threat, and Soviet pressure was undoubtedly as great an impetus for the transfer as any preconceived plan on the part of the Reich.

During the life of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, the Reich's political writers asserted that the transfer agreements had been concluded according to the Reich's wishes and acceded to by the Soviet Union, who recognized her own interests in so doing. Such reports satisfied German national pride, and the Soviet Union was content not to claim the initiative in the transfer proposals. But support for the thesis that the Soviet played a considerable part in this initiative may be found in the statements made by Hitler and Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, on the day that Germany attacked the Soviet Union—statements that destroyed the whole elaborate fabrication by referring to the resettlement as a vast sacrifice on the part of the Germans and a forced concession to the insatiable Soviet appetite.³³ Discounting the obvious anti-Soviet propaganda in such pronouncements, the implication remains that although Germany wanted to remove her minorities from the Soviet-controlled areas for purposes of her own, she received something more than mere encouragement from the Soviet to speed the process.

³³ *New York Times*, 23 June 1941.

VI

In any case, although the Reich ordered the evacuation of all those positions fraught with danger to her broader policy, it had no thought of yielding *all* positions. Germans living in the smaller states of Central Europe and the Balkans were to stay at their posts to serve as carriers of Germandom. No evacuation or exchange of population was envisioned at this time with regard to Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, or Slovakia—states which sought the good will of the Reich, or which were more or less dependent on the Reich. On the contrary, there the Reich used its power to strengthen the position of the German minorities and to create for them the legal status of a privileged state within a state.

Reich policy on German minorities bore little relation to the traditional international system of protecting national minorities. National Socialist doctrine had formulated instead its own theory of *Volksgruppenrecht* (folk group law) and of *Schutzrecht* (the protective right of the mother country over the folk groups scattered throughout the world).³⁴ Franz Neumann is undeniably right in stating that 'acceptance of the principle that the mother country is the political guardian of the minorities means not only the rejection of rational international relations but also the end of internal unity in every state having sizable minorities. It makes the mother people the arbiter of disputes between the state and the minorities living therein. . . Racial Germans throughout the world remain Germans, members of the folk groups, subject to its law. The fifth column is elevated to an institution.'³⁵

³⁴ The ideological basis was developed primarily by Böhm in *Das eigenständige Volk*. The most ardent advocate of this theory was Werner Hasselblatt, counsel to the *Verband der Deutschen Volksgruppen*. See 'Die politischen Elemente eines werdenden Volksgruppenrechts,' in *Jahrbuch der Akademie für deutsches Recht*, 1938, pp. 13-24.

³⁵ Neumann, *Behemoth*, pp. 162-3.

It was in this direction that German policy worked with regard to German minorities in Czechoslovakia (after the Munich conference), in Romania, Hungary, and Croatia. As observed above, the German-Czechoslovak treaty of 20 November 1938 provided for a compulsory exchange of 377,830 Germans residing in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, for 738,502 Czechs and Slovaks who lived in Czechoslovak provinces ceded to the Reich. This treaty, however, was never implemented. The leaders of the Reich suddenly changed their minds and decided that the planned exchange was 'technically possible and, at first glance, tempting, but nevertheless it was contrary to common sense'; such an evacuation of German colonists 'would have interfered with the new tasks that the Reich undertook in Hungary, Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia, and in other countries.'⁸⁶

After Munich, the Czechs found themselves saddled with an aggressive German minority that had been instructed to remain in Czechoslovakia as an outpost of Greater Germany instead of exercising its right to opt for return to Germany. The Reich started in their midst a new German Nazi movement under Dr. Ernst Kundt, former chairman of the Heinlein group in the Prague Parliament. In his 1939 New Year message Kundt declared that Germans in the Czech provinces were 'to strengthen a thousand-year position and to remain there and to hold it further, although the treaty of option gave them the chance to live under better conditions, to have better social position and to enjoy directly the happiness of the Third Reich.'⁸⁷

A few months later, on 15 March 1939, the armies of the Reich occupied all of Czechoslovakia. Bohemia and Moravia were proclaimed a Protectorate of the Reich, while Slovakia seceded and became an 'independent' state. In both new political

⁸⁶ Gustav Föhler-Hauke, 'Deutsche Volksgruppen und deutsche Arbeit in Böhmen, Mähren und der Slowakei,' in *Deutsche Volksforschung in Böhmen und Mähren*, June 1939, pp. 1-17.

⁸⁷ 'Volksdeutscher Aufbau im Osten,' in *Der Deutsche im Osten*, January 1939, p. 67.

entities, German folk groups received a position that could hardly be called 'minority status.' As early as December 1938, Dr. Kundt had categorically declared that 'those Germans who remained in Czechia aspire to a legal status which is not going to be defined according to the antiquated although still widely used pattern of minority law.'³⁸ This aspiration was fully realized. The German minority in the Protectorate enjoyed a highly privileged status, and was practically an independent 'state within a state.' A similar status was created for the German minority in 'independent' Slovakia, in rump Romania, in Hungary, and Croatia. The London *Economist* was far from exaggerating in stating that 'the final outcome of this system is obvious—a German organization of capitulations (on the model of the former special protections of foreign rights in countries like Egypt) throughout Southeastern Europe.'³⁹

What folk group law meant in countries dominated by Germany is quite clear from the patterns described. 'The German minority receives the status of a dominant majority, while the majority acquires the impotence of a minority,' says Franz Neumann in summarizing the German folk group theory.⁴⁰

But in drafting their elaborate arrangements for German minorities abroad, the Reich leaders definitely did not foresee the far-reaching political and military developments that were to cause them to alter their plans, with reference to both those groups that they preferred to retain as minorities and those that they transferred to German-incorporated foreign territory. The cession of territories by one country to another, the dismemberment of vanquished nations, and, above all, the swift and relentless advance of the Soviet armies into German-held areas were to play a major role in forcing the Germans to reshape their policies to fit the exigencies of a war-torn world in which they did not become the unchallenged masters.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴⁰ Neumann, op. cit. p. 165.

³⁹ *Economist*, 28 March 1942.

III

Transfer of the South Tyrol Germans

I

By the treaty of St. Germain, signed on 10 September 1919, Italy acquired that portion of the former Austrian royal domain that lay within the basin of the river known along its upper course as the Etsch and along its lower as the Adige. Thus Italy gained the frontier on the Brenner which had been promised her by France, Great Britain, and Russia in the secret treaty made in London on 26 April 1915. This cession could not afterwards be easily reconciled with that one of President Wilson's 14 Points which stated that 'a readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.' Only the southern Trentino section of the Austrian territory claimed by Italy was purely Italian and this was separated by the linguistic frontier of Salurn from the purely German part of the South Tyrol which, according to the Austrian census of 1910, had a German population of 234,568. A census taken by the Italian authorities in 1921 recorded 195,650 Germans in the South Tyrol. This decrease of some 40,000 may be accounted for in part by voluntary emigration from the province in and after 1919.

Presumably because she was both a 'Great Power' and one of the victorious 'Allied and Associated Powers,' Italy never signed a treaty for the protection of minorities. At first the Italian government treated its new German subjects with much psychological understanding. But in 1923 when fascism took the helm in Italy a drastic policy of Italianization was inaugurated. The region was renamed Alto Adige; German place names disap-

peared; German associations were disbanded; Italian schools replaced the German; and Italian became the only official language of the country.¹

The anti-German policy of the Fascist government found its expression in the economic as well as the cultural sphere. From 1927 Bolzano² became an increasingly important center for such Italian enterprises as Lancia Motors and the Montecatini chemical and metallurgical works, a development that necessitated the importation into the district of large numbers of Italian workmen. In 1935, the Tyrolean valleys witnessed an immigration of Italian laborers who came to work in the newly developed armament industry.³ A land bank (Ente di Rinascita Agraria per le tre Venezie) was created and by 1939 it had bought up 300 farms in the South Tyrol, only a few of which had previously been owned by Italians. By a special decree issued on 7 January 1937, the bank was authorized to expropriate any land that suited its purposes.

In 1939 Dr. Walter Schneefuss clearly stated that despite Italian ties with Germany, 'the colonization and immigration of Italians is being actively encouraged by the Italian government. Numerous new settlements have been created, especially in the Etsch Valley and in the town of Bolzano. Every sale of land requires a special permit, and expropriations are also being effected; new owners are exclusively Italians. This policy is being carried out steadily and methodically, with the purpose of setting up an Italian upper class over the autochthonous German peasantry.'⁴ According to the *Survey of International*

¹ For studies of Italian rule in the South Tyrol, see: Reut-Nicolussi, *Tyrol under the Axe of Italian Fascism*; Herford, *The Case of German South Tyrol Against Italy*; Herre, *Die Südtiroler Frage*; Winkler, *Deutsch-Südtirol*.

² In 1926 the districts of Bolzano, Merano, and Bressanone were united into the province of Bolzano. *Enciclopedia Italiana*, vol. 2, p. 718.

³ Federico Ricci, 'L'affaire du Tyrol du Sud,' in *Voix Européennes*, July-August 1939, pp. 275-7.

⁴ Schneefuss, *Des Reiches neue Nachbarn*, pp. 375-6.

Affairs for 1927, there was a time when 'it looked as though the policy of Italianizing the South Tyrol would be superseded, if at all, by the still more ruthless policy of expatriating them [the Germans] in order to fill their places with Italian settlers.'⁵

The oppression of the German folk group in the South Tyrol was for years the major source of friction in Italy's relations with both Germany and Austria. The Weimar Republic, though never in a position to put actual pressure on Italy, repeatedly expressed indignation at the treatment of the South Tyrolese, and even contemplated a boycott of Italian goods and the suspension of all German tourist traffic.⁶ A certain moderating influence was exerted by successive Austrian governments. Originally the Tyrol question had threatened to become a source of serious conflict between Christian-Socialist Austria and Fascist Italy. In 1928, when Chancellor Ignaz Seipel attempted to complain against Mussolini's decree forbidding the use of German in religious instruction, he was severely rebuked, although Mussolini later became interested in maintaining good-neighbor relations with Austria and overlooked Vienna's sponsorship of the Tyrolese case. In 1937, as a result of Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg's efforts to promote Austrian and Italian friendship, political prisoners in the South Tyrol were freed and German language courses were permitted in the schools.

This improvement, however, was short-lived. Those South Tyrol Germans who had put their faith in Austrian 'friendly intervention' were bitterly disappointed. Realizing that Austria was too weak to help them, they turned to Hitler for liberation. The National Socialist party, until it came to power, had remained consistently indifferent to the fate of the Tyrolese. The right of self-determination which figured so largely in the party program was in this case subordinated to the doctrine of a

⁵ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1927, p. 201.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 196.

'natural alliance with Italy, by which alone Germany can become strong.' Hitler himself stated that 'it would be a crime to set the stakes at 200,000 [Tyrolese] Germans.'⁷ Nevertheless, despite its earlier profession of disinterest in the question, the party, after 1933, had been extremely active in spreading its propaganda in South Tyrol. In addition to the pro-Nazi *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland*, which had worked on behalf of the South Tyrolese throughout the postwar period, Nazi organizations were formed among the 9,000 to 10,000 *Reichsdeutsche* living there, and soon spread secretly among the German-speaking South Tyrolese. The Zurich *Volksrecht* reported on 6 August 1938 that Italian authorities had discovered a circular letter, apparently originating in Munich and addressed to National Socialists of Italian nationality, urging them to refrain from all provocative action until an Anglo-Italian pact had been signed, and thereafter to intensify their propaganda. The letter declared that the day of deliverance was not far off, and that the Führer had taken all responsibility for them upon himself.

Austria's incorporation into the Reich in March 1938 gave particular weight to these rather vague promises. Tyrolese Germans, even those who were not Nazi-minded, believed 'that now that Hitler had swallowed the new Austria, there is nothing to prevent him from swallowing us too; then we would at least be together, an united Tirol; we could speak German and live and die as we have always done.'⁸

The combination of rising resentment among the Tyrolese and the growing Nazi influence naturally did little to encourage the Italian government to view the future of the South Tyrol with

⁷ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York, 1940) p. 917.

⁸ Lothar, *Beneath Another Sun*, p. 10. (This book is not only a fascinating novel but a valuable collection of documents concerning the transfer of the Tyrolese Germans in the period preceding and immediately following the agreement of 21 October 1939. Mr. Lothar had access to the documentary material on the problem which belonged to the late Gerido Zernatto, former Austrian Secretary of State.)

optimism. With the absorption of Austria the Greater German Reich had moved into the immediate neighborhood of the vital Brenner frontier; the Puster Valley gave her an additional and even easier ingress to Italy than the Brenner Pass. Small comfort was derived from Hitler's solemn pronouncement in May 1938 that it was his 'irrevocable will and his bequest to the German people that it shall regard the frontier of the Alps raised by nature between us both as forever inviolable.'⁹

By 1939 it must have become quite clear to the Italian government that the Tyrol Germans not only would never be assimilated but that they would remain fertile soil for nationalist and irredentist propaganda. This alien and discontented population represented a permanent threat to Italian domination. It is understandable therefore that Mussolini should have raised the question of its removal to eliminate cause for friction between Italy and Germany. Hitler was in no position to refuse such a suggestion. In the spring of 1939 the Third Reich needed, perhaps more urgently than at any other time since its inception, to maintain the solidarity of the Axis. Thus an accord was promptly reached.

II

The basic transfer agreement was signed in Berlin on 23 June 1939.¹⁰ But reports circulating abroad early in July that the German and Italian governments were negotiating a treaty for the resettlement of the German population of the South Tyrol were characterized by a spokesman of the German Foreign Office as 'unlikely and fanciful to the extreme.'¹¹ On 14 July both the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Giornale d'Italia* carried references to 'misleading statements about the South Tyrol in the Western

⁹ Hitler, *My New Order*, p. 487.

¹⁰ Georg Runge, 'Zur Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen,' in *Nation und Staat*, January 1940, p. 118.

¹¹ H. G. L., 'The South Tyrol Agreement,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 29 July 1939, p. 3.

democratic press.' According to the official Italian version presented by Virginio Gayda, 'a quiet and completely voluntary exodus' was about to take place, 'based on a clear and friendly agreement that respected the national desires of the interested parties.'¹²

A detailed propaganda statement broadcast by the Italian radio stressed that the German-Italian understanding 'represents a solution to the German minority problem in the Alto Adige' and continued: 'And as Greece and Turkey in 1932 solved one of Europe's knottiest postwar minorities problems by transplanting 1.4 million people back to their native soil, so the Axis has solved the South Tyrolean problem with yet greater statesmanship and foresight.'

The substance of the agreement was as follows:

1. All German citizens resident in South Tyrol must return to the Reich forthwith.
2. Those residents of the South Tyrol who were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy before the annexation of South Tyrol to the Kingdom of Italy, and who became Italian through the annexation, are also advised to return to the Reich. These former Austro-Hungarians have, however, the right to make a free and uninfluenced decision in a plebiscite whose details will be announced.
3. Former Austro-Hungarians who do not wish to re-emigrate, but to remain in Italy, have not, however, the right to choose the place where they will reside in the future. The Royal Italian Government will decide this matter in the individual cases.
4. The evacuation of South Tyrol by the German-speaking minority has been put in charge of SS leader Heinrich Himmler.'¹³

Three months later, on 21 October, a definite agreement was signed in Rome. The Italian press hailed the transfer accord as a great success for the Axis. *Giornale d'Italia* commented: 'In a few

¹² *Manchester Guardian*, 17 July 1939.

¹³ Lothar, op. cit. pp. 45-6.

months the problem of Alto Adige will be completely solved. Even the least possible reason for friction between Italy and Germany will be thus eradicated forever. Hitler has maintained his promise. The Brenner frontier is final.' ¹⁴ The Turin *Stampa* jubilantly stressed the fact that the South Tyrol, so rich in historical associations, would henceforth be inhabited by Italians only, because those who chose to remain there would have to become 100 per cent Italians, to renounce their language and customs and to 'dissolve themselves in the Italian race.' ¹⁵ The German press chimed in. But public opinion in all the other European countries and in the United States was almost unanimously unfavorable.

As indicated above, the transfer dealt with two distinct categories of Germans in the South Tyrol. In the first group were the *Reichsdeutsche* numbering from 9,000 to 10,000. These included all former Austrian residents who had not accepted Italian citizenship in 1919 and who therefore automatically became German citizens after the *Anschluss*, and all the Reich Germans resident in the Tyrol. ¹⁶ Their evacuation was obligatory and had to be effected within the three months following the signing of the agreement.

The evacuation began immediately after the first announcement in July when official emigration bureaus opened in Bolzano and in the near-by resort of Merano. The first exodus consisted of 200 German nationals; a second involving 350 followed the next day, and the day after that, 450 departed. All were German citizens who had been domiciled in the Province of Bolzano for less than four years. ¹⁷ Further departures followed closely; by the end of July, some 6,000 had left. ¹⁸

¹⁴ *Giornale d'Italia*, 20 October 1939.

¹⁵ Quoted in *Posledniya Novosti*, 24 October 1939.

¹⁶ Friends of Europe, *The Future of German South Tirol*, p. 14, and *New International Yearbook*, 1939, p. 388.

¹⁷ Lothar, op. cit. pp. 48, 95.

¹⁸ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 October 1939.

The second category of potential evacuees comprised Italian citizens of German ethnic nationality, who were given the choice of retaining Italian nationality and remaining permanently in Italy or of opting for German citizenship and moving to the Reich. Those choosing Reich citizenship had to renounce their Italian citizenship before being transferred. The loss of citizenship extended to wives and children of the expatriates and could never be regained. The plebiscite was to operate until midnight on 31 December 1939. Those who voted to leave were granted three years to dispose of their properties and migrate. At this time no provision was made for the automatic assumption of German nationality by the *Volksdeutsche* who chose to emigrate to the Reich, but early in June 1940 it was announced that they could obtain German citizenship by a shortened process and without fees by applying to the *Reichstatthalter* for the Tyrol and Vorarlberg before 30 June.¹⁹

Shortly after the evacuation of the *Reichsdeutsche* there occurred the deportation of an unascertained number of Italian citizens of German ethnic nationality who had opposed the idea of the transfer and were known for their anti-Nazi sentiments. In a speech before the Fascist Party Council, Mussolini was reported to have declared that 'anyone who dares to oppose the South Tyrolean agreement either actively or passively will be court-martialed and shot.'²⁰ Actually the Fascist authorities did not go quite so far; they simply proclaimed 'undesirable' and deported to the Reich all those whom they considered capable of creating difficulties or of organizing some kind of sabotage. In Bolzano on 17 August, 1,003 such 'undesirables' were earmarked for deportation between 29 and 31 August, and 1,700 more were scheduled for deportation before 6 September. Lists of these persons were posted at the prefecture, open to public

¹⁹ J. R., 'Transfer of Population in Europe Since 1913,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 19 August 1944, pp. 659-60.

²⁰ Lothar, op. cit. pp. 106-7.

inspection, and accompanied by the following proclamation instructing the deportees on procedure:

Pursuant to the decree of the Minister of the Interior, regulating the settlement of the Alto Adige in accordance with a new treaty concluded with the German Reich, it is hereby ordered that:

For political and military reasons the following persons shall leave the Province of Bozen [Bolzano] and settle abroad in the new domiciles to be assigned to them and announced later. (Then came Christian names, surnames, and occupations.)

Such persons . . . are entitled to take with them all that part of their personal property consisting of clothing, and provisions for three days; furthermore, the equivalent of not more than 500 lire in reichsmarks. All other real and personal property hitherto belonging to them shall be placed in my hands as trustee. An appraisal commission appointed by the Ministry of the Interior will establish the value of this property at a convenient time, not later, however, than December 31, 1939, dispose of it, and transmit the proceeds to the former owners according to a conversion scale to be determined by the Royal Italian and German Finance administrations. The currency in which this payment will be made is the reichsmark.

There is no legal recourse against this decree, issued in concert by the Royal Italian and German Reich governments.

Persons opposing or attempting to evade it shall be punished by imprisonment up to twenty years and by confiscation of their entire property.

The prefect of the Province of Bozen, Mastromattei
Bolzano, August 17, 1939.²¹

III

With respect to the plebiscite, both German and Italian sources carefully stressed the voluntary character of the transfer. Giuseppe Mastromattei, prefect of Bolzano, categorically stated in the magazine *Athesia Augusta* that 'contrary to certain malicious falsehoods that have been circulated, this is not an enforced

²¹ Ibid. pp. 125-6.

evacuation, let alone a mass banishment of the entire population of Alto Adige, but simply the return to the bosom of the Reich of the Germans and persons German in sentiment who live in Alto Adige.' ²² In practice, however, the 'voluntary' aspects of the plebiscite proved to be purely theoretical. Heavy pressure was exerted by both German and Italian authorities, and the summary expulsion of all foreign tourists from Italy early in July has been generally explained by the desire of the Italian government to eliminate undesirable eyewitnesses to these procedures.

For one thing, it was widely suggested—and believed—that those South Tyrolese who did not vote for resettlement in Germany would be forcibly transplanted by the Italian authorities to other districts in Italy or to Abyssinia. It is not clear whether this was merely a rumor spread with the intention of influencing the voting, or a provision of the original plan which was later modified. In any case, the press and radio, and official, semi-official, and unofficial spokesmen took care that almost every piece of news on the subject should be followed by a contradictory or misleading report.

The Nazi leader in the Bolzano prefecture declared that 'those who choose Italy can no longer count on the interest and protection of the Third Reich.' When asked what that meant, he answered, 'It is absolutely at the discretion of the Italian government to do whatever it pleases with the former Austrians who decide for Italy.' And he added significantly, 'The Italians regard Ethiopia as a land of milk and honey. You can probably draw your own conclusions from that.' ²³ A few days later, the Italian Undersecretary for Domestic Affairs, Buffarini-Guidi, stated to Giuseppe Stanza, Deputy for Trento, that the inhabitants of Alto Adige who had the right to cast their vote for Italy would be resettled in the provinces south of the Po. But this same Buffarini-Guidi was reported as saying to foreign journalists that those who cast their votes for Italy could stay in the

²² Ibid. p. 96.

²³ Ibid. p. 49.

Tyrol.²⁴ Prefect Mastromattei of Bolzano declared in the August issue of *Athesia Augusta* that those *Volksdeutsche* who wished to remain in South Tyrol and 'had always been loyal to Italy and to the institutions of the regime would be left to continue quietly to labor on their ancestral soil.'²⁵ This statement was confirmed by the Italian press and radio in October,²⁶ and by Mussolini himself in March.²⁷

All these and many other alternately alarming and reassuring reports created an atmosphere of tense uncertainty which greatly influenced the Tyrolese in casting their votes. Officials alone were given the clear-cut choice of voting for Germany and being removed to Austria, or of choosing Italian nationality and being removed to another part of Italy; practically the whole official population therefore opted for the Reich.²⁸

Under the terms of the agreement, the German-speaking inhabitants of the provinces of Bolzano, Udine, Trento, and Belluno were given until midnight, 31 December 1939, to choose German citizenship and resettlement in the Reich or to remain Italian citizens in the above-mentioned provinces. It was understood that those who did not sign any declaration were to remain Italian citizens.

The results of this option made public on 11 January 1940 are shown by the following figures: ²⁹

<i>Province</i>	<i>Eligible for Option</i>	<i>Voted for Germany</i>	<i>Voted for Italy</i>	<i>Undeclared</i>
Bolzano.....	229,500	166,488	27,712	35,300
Trentino.....	24,453	13,015	3,802	7,636
Udine.....	5,603	4,576	337	690
Belluno.....	7,429	1,006	6,423	—
Undetermined....	—	280	—	—
TOTAL.....	266,985	185,365	38,274	43,626

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 96-7.

²⁵ Reprinted in *Giornale d'Italia*, 8 August 1939.

²⁶ *New York Times*, 7 October 1939.

²⁷ Ibid. 22 March 1940.

²⁸ J. R., op. cit. p. 660.

²⁹ *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, 1940, p. 32.

The average percentage of German-speaking South Tyrolese who voted for return to the Reich was about 69.5 per cent: 72.5 per cent in Bolzano and 50.3 per cent in the other provinces, which were mixed lingual zones. The Deutsches Nachrichten Büro (DNB), reporting the result, described it as a great German success. It must be noted, however, that in the light of the outcome of similar plebiscites in the Baltic states, the Soviet-incorporated areas of Poland, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina, this opinion cannot be defended.

Prefect Mastromattei emphasized in his *Athesia Augusta* article that 'the Fascist and Berlin governments have very properly guaranteed full protection of the economic interests of all those being repatriated.'³⁰ During January 1940, a mixed Italo-German commission was appointed to assess the value of the property of those who opted for resettlement to the Reich. It is widely believed that serious difficulty was encountered in arriving at a compromise between German and Italian estimates. The Reich claimed 12 thousand million lire, whereas the Italian estimates did not exceed 5 thousand million. Only Mussolini's personal intervention, in the interest of harmony between the two nations, secured agreement on a sum between 7 and 8 thousand million, and an accord was signed in February.³¹ Arrangements were made that a further agreement to regulate the payment of this Italian debt should be concluded in 1941, and that meanwhile Italy would not pay any installments that year but would allow the money realized from the liquidation of the property of Italian citizens, confiscated by the Reich in Austria, the Sudeten, Poland, and even in Germany, to be used as a preliminary payment; the remainder was to be paid in merchandise.³²

³⁰ Lothar, op. cit. p. 96.

³¹ *New York Times*, 13 January and 26 February 1940; *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 6 February 1940.

³² J. R., op. cit. p. 660.

IV

Soon after the plebiscite ended there occurred a great rush to the Reich, prompted in part by nationalistic zeal, in part by fear of deportation. As early as 2 February 1940 a report from Rome put the number of Tyrolese who had emigrated at 14,506.³³ (It is not clear whether the 10,000 *Reichsdeutsche* are included in this figure.) A few days later, the Nazi leader of South Tyrol and Vorarlberg and his deputy told the foreign press that columns variously estimated at 200 to 800 persons were crossing the Brenner frontier daily.³⁴ By September 1940, about 50,000 had left. In an article in *Deutsche Arbeit*, Dorothea Goedicke reveals that these first 50,000 repatriates comprised 'all those who had no real property and whose emigration would not otherwise cause any economic harm.' The article further states that all the farmers and farm laborers, as well as all the workers employed in the essential plants, were temporarily not affected by the evacuation. 'We are now enjoying a quiet spell at our branch,' reported the chief of the Bolzano office of the official *Deutsche Umsiedlungs Treuhandgesellschaft* (DUT) (German Resettlement Trust). 'Only about 70 South Tyrolese are now moving daily to the Reich, while during the first weeks after the plebiscite there were about 500 emigrants daily, and later an average of 200. It can truly be said that all those whose emigration was immediately possible have now left. We expect a new rush after the harvest.'³⁵

This rush never materialized. According to official Italian statistics for 1940, the total number of emigrants from Italy to Ger-

³³ *New York Times*, 3 February 1940.

³⁴ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 8 February 1940.

³⁵ Goedicke, 'Südtirol—Musterbeispiel einer Umsiedlung,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, September 1940.

many was 42,308; in 1941 it dropped to 7,584.³⁶ Even if it were conceded that all the Italian citizens who emigrated to Germany during these two years were South Tyrolese Germans, the total would be only 49,892. To this figure must be added the 10,000 *Reichsdeutsche* and some 2,700 deportees, who were not included in official emigration statistics, to make a total of some 62,000 as of the end of 1941. The June 1942 issue of the German monthly, *Deutsche Post aus dem Osten*, puts the figures at 72,000. On 31 January 1943, the Rome radio reported that Mussolini had received Agestino Podesta who had completed his task of carrying out the Italo-German agreements concerning the Alto Adige. This would indicate that in 1942 the remaining 113,000 of the total who had voted to return to Germany had actually left Italy. Such an assumption is hardly justified in the light of an earlier Transocean broadcast on 21 August 1942, which reported that 'the German and Italian governments are agreed that for special reasons due to the war, the resettlement of Germans from South Tyrol within the Reich, in accordance with the Convention of 21 October 1939, will not be possible before 31 December 1942 [the original deadline agreed upon]. The two governments have consequently decided to postpone the date at which the resettlement must be terminated until 31 December 1943.'

All available data indicate that the resettlement was not terminated even at that date. The radical change in Italy's political situation, caused by the Allied military invasion and the fall of Mussolini in the summer of 1943, gave a new complexion to the matter. In October the provinces of Bolzano, Trento, and Belluno were grouped together under a single administration bearing the German name of Vor-Alpenland. Italian courts were abolished and German ones set up; in schools the Italian language was replaced by German throughout Bolzano Province; Italian in-

³⁶ Massili, *Corso di Demografia*, pp. 216-17.

scriptions on the walls disappeared, and all vestiges of Italian culture and nationality were eliminated.³⁷

In these circumstances, there was, of course, no question of completing the transfer of the Germans who had opted for the Reich but had not yet been evacuated. As for the 82,000 who had chosen Italian citizenship either by actual option or failure to vote, the Agence Télégraphique Suisse reported on 9 May 1944 that these people now 'receive least sympathy from the German occupants, although they are the real depository of historical tradition in the South Tyrol.' Thus, the majority of South Tyrolese Germans remained on the spot. John MacCormac, special correspondent for the *New York Times*, who visited the South Tyrol in September 1945, reported on 16 November that not more than 75,000 Germans had left this area since 1939, and that 100 of the 109 communities that had been predominantly German still retained their German majorities.

The exceptionally slow pace of the German emigration may be largely explained by the three-year evacuation period stipulated in the original treaty, which certainly implied no need for great haste. Furthermore, there was no driving force comparable to *horror sovieticus* (fear of bolshevization) to impel the Germans to flee the land of their long residence. On the contrary, many of the factors that spurred the evacuation in its early stages lost their effectiveness after the winter of 1939-40. Those persons who had chosen to remain in their old homes came to realize that they would not be forcibly deported and thus gained a new sense of security. Even those who had opted for the Reich gradually perceived that they would be better off in an Italian-dominated Tyrol, far from the horrors of war and in familiar surroundings, than they would be in a new region that had not even been definitely selected.

This last circumstance must be given special emphasis. Strange

³⁷ *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 February 1944; *Libera Stampa*, 28 February 1944.

as it may seem, the leaders of the Reich's resettlement policy never made up their minds about the territory where the Tyrolese Germans should be resettled. At the start of the transfer it was intended that 60,000 to 80,000 should be established in the Austrian North Tyrol, and to this end a special office (*Umsiedlung Südtirol*) was set up in Innsbruck. As for those South Tyrolese for whom no room could be found in the North Tyrol, rumors circulated to the effect that they might be transferred to the Beskids region of the Polish province of western Galicia on the northern slopes of the Carpathians. It was stressed that the climate and topography of this area were similar to those of the South Tyrol and that the influx of South Tyrolese would strengthen the small German ethnic isles in and around the towns of Bielsk and Biala.³⁸ Other sources spoke of resettlement in 'other parts of Austria and the Old Reich,'³⁹ as well as in the Protectorate (Moravia).⁴⁰

'The main idea is to carry out the emigration only after the place of resettlement in the Reich has been definitely determined,' wrote Dorothea Goedicke in September 1940. And she added, 'The bulk of the optants [in favor of the resettlement] will be transferred only after the final designation of the resettlement area.'⁴¹ This final stipulation was never made, and the numerical results of the resettlement proved to be very meager.

Actually, the vast majority of the Tyrolese removed in 1940-41 were installed on the other side of the Alps, in the smallest Reichsgau, Tyrol-Vorarlberg, with 500,000 inhabitants. In March 1941, *Das Reich* spoke of 'tens of thousands who migrated to this district from their old South Tyrol homeland' and stated that in Innsbruck alone over 5,000 new apartments had been erected during the last two years; it was expected that 'within a short

³⁸ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 October 1939.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 8 February 1940.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 11 January 1940.

⁴¹ Goedicke, *op. cit.*

time' the population of Brégenz would increase by 25 per cent and that a similar increase would take place in smaller towns also, even in villages like Jenbach in the Inn Valley.⁴²

Another group of Tyrolese transferees was settled in the former Austrian province of Carinthia, from which, according to the Royal Yugoslav Information Centre, 2,400 Slovene peasant families numbering some 10,000 persons were removed to make room for the incoming Tyrolese.⁴³

The DUT report for 1942 announced that the South Tyrolese would be settled with 'speed and preference' in Lorraine, Luxembourg, and the eastern part of the Sudetenland. With regard to Lorraine, the report specified that there some 1,000 homes had been 'cleared' for resettlers from South Bukovina and South Tyrol.⁴⁴ This resettlement project could have involved only a very limited number of Tyrolese, especially since they are mentioned in second place after the Bukovinians.

The DUT report further stated that the organization had collaborated in the installment of 412 South Tyrolese artisans in the Alpine and Danube regions, partly on 'liberated' homesteads in Carinthia. (This apparently refers to the expelled Slovene peasants.) South Tyrolese fruit and wine growers were mentioned among those settled in South Styria, German-annexed Yugoslav territory from which the Slovene population had been deported to the Reich. Luxembourg was also referred to as a resettlement area for the transferred Tyrolese.⁴⁵

But with all these data on accomplishment, the report cautiously acknowledges that 'the operation of resettling South Tyrolese was now as ever a difficult and laborious business,' and mentions no figures on the Tyrolese who actually moved during the 1940-42 period. It cites instead a purely arbitrary figure of

⁴² Fritz Fay, 'Bauernland Tirol,' in *Das Reich*, 16 March 1941, p. 10.

⁴³ See also *Contemporary Review*, February 1943; *Archiv für Wandlungswesen und Auslandskunde*, 1942, no. 1-2, p. 67.

⁴⁴ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 April 1943.

⁴⁵ *Luxemburger Wort*, 31 July 1943.

237,802 persons 'as taken care of' (*betreut*). This figure corresponds roughly to the total number of Germans in the South Tyrol eligible for option on 31 December 1939; therefore it includes not only the 185,365 who opted for resettlement to the Reich, but also the 43,626 who did not declare themselves and were to remain in Italy, and even a part of the 38,274 who openly voted for Italian citizenship. So obviously misleading a figure strongly suggests the failure of the German Tyrol resettlement scheme, even before the fortunes of war made resettlement a superfluity.

IV

German Minorities in Estonia and Latvia

I

FOR many centuries after the penetration of German merchants and missionaries into Livonia in the early thirteenth century, Germans occupied a dominant position in the Baltic areas currently designated as Estonia and Latvia, holding nearly all the land in large estates and furnishing the administrative, cultural, and commercial leadership of the territory. Although they comprised only a thin alien stratum in the native population, their supremacy was sustained by a number of persuasive economic and political factors. Chief among the former was land ownership. Shortly before World War I, 716 German-owned estates constituted 51.1 per cent of all the cultivated land in the Livland area and 84.7 per cent of the forests, amounting to 51.8 per cent of the total value of all real property.¹ In Kurland, 41 per cent of all real property in private hands was concentrated in large German estates.² Furthermore, until the closing decades of the last century, Baltic Germans enjoyed the protection of the Czarist government and wielded exceptional influence at the court and in all administrative affairs.

Always conscious, however, of the numerically narrow base of their power and prestige,³ the Baltic German landholders had made several efforts to bolster their position by settling German peasants from other parts of Russia and elsewhere. Among the

¹ Statistisches Büro der Livländischen Ritterschaft, *Veröffentlichungen*, Heft 2, p. 29.

² Oertzen, *Baltenland*, p. 330.

³ According to the census of 1897, the 143,000 Germans in Kurland, Estland and Livland represented only 7.25 per cent of the entire population. See Mendeleyev, *K poznaniyu Rossiyi*, pp. 36, 43.

earlier attempts of this nature was the peasant colony, Hirschenhof, established in 1766 with 262 settlers, whose number grew to 5,000 by 1902.⁴ During the 1907-14 period, more than 20,000 peasants and agricultural workers from Poland, Wolhynia, and the Volga were settled in Kurland and Livland.⁵ But all such efforts were insufficient to effect any substantial changes in the balance between the German minority and the native population.

Sharp lines of demarcation between the two groups persisted, national antagonisms intensifying social distinctions. To the native peasants, the German barons represented the forces of national and social oppression. To the Germans, the natives appeared an inferior race, fit only for exploitation and unworthy of the benefits of German culture. Between two such hostile views there could be no point of contact. In the towns, however, a certain degree of intercourse and a resultant Germanization were inevitable. In 1918 Dr. Hermann von Rosen, a leader of the Baltic Germans, pointed out that although there were barely 200,000 Germans in the Baltic areas, no less than 300,000 persons of non-German origin were familiar with the German language and used it habitually, having found it otherwise impossible to conduct a business or civil career.⁶

German aspirations for the extension of their power in the Baltic territories received vigorous support from the peace treaty concluded with the Soviet government at Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918 and the supplementary agreement of 27 August guaranteeing German hegemony in Kurland, Livland and Estland. Still aware of the need to fortify their position among the native population, the German military administration took steps to break up large German estates into small holdings for the settlement of German soldiers and peasants,⁷ but subsequent political and military events thwarted the realization of these projects.

⁴ Gonze, *Hirschenhof*, p. 100.

⁵ Schulz, *Der deutsche Bauer im Baltikum*, pp. 68, 93.

⁶ Rosen, 'Bevölkerung,' in *Die deutschen Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*, p. 27.

⁷ Chambon, *Origines et histoire de la Lettonie*, pp. 73-6.

The Germans, however, played an adroit game in the civil war that followed the Bolshevik invasions of Estonia and Latvia. The recognition by the new German government of the temporary government of Karl Ulmanis, formed after Latvia's declaration of independence on 18 November 1918, was not entirely disinterested. An agreement concluded on 29 December obliged Latvia to grant the right to Latvian citizenship to 'all foreign soldiers who had been active for at least four weeks in volunteer formations in the fight for liberation of the territory of the Latvian state from the Bolsheviks.'⁸ For their part, the leading German organization in Latvia, the *Baltische Nationalausschuss*, promised to provide with land all German volunteers who would acquire Latvian citizenship on the basis of this agreement. The Baltic Germans hoped to attract thousands of German volunteers in this way, to obtain Latvian citizenship for them, and to settle them on the land; they would thus create for themselves a powerful social and political position. Recruiting offices were opened in Berlin and other German towns, the German government taking upon itself, at the Latvians' request, responsibility for equipping and arming these groups.⁹ Only in the second half of 1919 did the Allies realize the danger implicit in the presence of such German armed units in the Baltic region, and the concomitant German national and political plans. As a result of the efforts of the Allied Mixed Commission, the German military evacuation began in earnest, and by the middle of December 1919 had been completed.¹⁰

Following the departure of the last German troops, the Baltic Germans were definitely compelled to renounce the hope of hegemony. There could be no question of regaining their former status. In the small newly constituted Baltic states they had to be

⁸ The full text of the agreement appears in Winnig, *Heimkehr*, p. 88. Winnig signed the agreement as German Minister in Estonia and Latvia.

⁹ Gloger, *Baltikum*, pp. 96-7.

¹⁰ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States*, p. 26.

content with the prospect of living in the usual situation of a national minority.

They entered this new phase of their existence weaker numerically than they had been before. In 1920 the German minority in Latvia did not exceed 58,113 persons (3.7 per cent of the entire population), while the German minority in Estonia in 1922 totaled only 18,319 persons (1.7 per cent of the whole population).¹¹ This situation may be attributed to World War I and the subsequent repatriation to Germany. According to official German sources, 25,000 Baltic Germans left Latvia and Estonia after 1918; approximately 5,000 of this group later returned.¹² In 1930 there were 69,855 Germans (3.7 per cent) in Latvia, but the census of 1935 showed a new diminution to only 62,144 (3.2 per cent). In Estonia the 1934 census recorded 16,346 Germans (1.5 per cent) in contrast with 18,319 (1.7 per cent) in 1922.¹³ The explanation for the steadily diminishing population may be found in emigration and in the declining birth rate and the rising death rate among the Germans, the latter due mainly to the predominance of the older age groups.¹⁴

This numerical decrease, however, in no measure impaired the German minorities' will to live. Of itself the outlook for their existence as minorities was in no way gloomy; the juridical, national, and cultural status of the Germans in both Baltic states was decidedly favorable.

¹¹ Winkler, *Deutschtum in aller Welt*, p. 128.

¹² M. B., 'German Minorities in Europe,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 9 March 1940, p. 281.

¹³ Winkler, *Deutschtum in aller Welt*, pp. 130, 136.

¹⁴ For statistics, see Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States*, pp. 33, 36; W. Gradmann, 'Die umgesiedelten deutschen Volksgruppen,' in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, May 1941, p. 281; Walter Helmut, 'Zur Volksbiologie der deutschen Volksgruppen,' in *Nation und Staat*, December 1939, pp. 87-90; Heinz Müller, 'Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung der Nationalitäten in Lettland,' in *Volk und Rasse*, 1939, Heft 2, p. 44.

II

Estonia had a well-earned reputation for the model treatment of her national minorities.¹⁵ The constitution of 1920 guaranteed instruction in their mother tongue to racial minorities and granted every Estonian citizen the right to declare to what nationality he belonged. Minorities could establish autonomous institutions for the preservation and development of their national culture,¹⁶ and the constitution further provided that individual Estonian citizens of German, Russian, Swedish, and Jewish ethnic origin should have the right to address the central administrative bodies in their own languages. On 12 February 1925 a Law of Cultural Autonomy was adopted, providing that any minority numbering not less than 3,000 persons should have the right to exercise national autonomy. The highest organ of autonomy, the Cultural Council, was granted jurisdiction over all educational, cultural, and charitable institutions, and the collection of special taxes from the members of the minority; the minorities received a corresponding part of the state and community budget for cultural purposes. The German (and the Jewish) minority availed itself of these rights and a German author was able to state that 'culturally the German minority in Estonia is entirely satisfied.'¹⁷

But if the German minority had no cause for complaint in the matter of national and cultural rights, its protests against the far-reaching social change in the shape of land reform were all the more bitter. Generous as it was in many respects, the young Estonian state was determined to abolish German economic supremacy. As pointed out above, German predominance in the Baltic countries had as its main basis a large land ownership. In 1919, 58 per cent of the entire land area of Estonia was concen-

¹⁵ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States*, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Das Grundgesetz des Freistaates Estland*, pp. 23, 34, 35.

¹⁷ Trampler, *Staaten und nationale Gemeinschaften*, p. 124.

trated in the hands of a small group of Germans.¹⁸ Thus it was clear that any land reform would have to be carried out almost exclusively at the expense of the big German landowners.

In the Estonian Parliament on 29 July 1919, the chairman of the committee for the preparation for land reform declared: '... when an animal is to be slaughtered, its backbone has to be broken; the big estates being the backbone of the German national group, they must be expropriated in order to annihilate the Germans.'¹⁹ Under the Agrarian Law of 10 October 1919, 4,882,172 acres or 84.2 per cent of the entire expropriated area were removed from German control;²⁰ the estates left to them were not to exceed 330 acres each.²¹ By the end of 1939, there were in Estonia only 350 German agricultural estates, totaling 86,485 acres.²² Although the law of 5 March 1926 provided for compensation for the expropriated land, the amounts actually paid were negligible.

At the end of the 1930's the German minority in Estonia was composed mainly of townspeople, despite the fact that the Germans' strength had resided in the relatively few landholders. The distribution of the 8,238 economically active members constituted a peculiar phenomenon, as shown by the following figures from the *Baltic Times* of 18 October 1939:

Agriculture.....	818
Industry.....	1,589
Trade.....	1,597
Transport.....	129
Communal work.....	1,634
Domestic or other service.....	327
Other occupation or no occupation.....	1,877
Occupation unknown.....	267

¹⁸ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States*, p. 106.

¹⁹ Gloger, *op. cit.* p. 137.

²⁰ Schulz, *op. cit.* p. 132.

²¹ Ernst C. Helmreich, 'The Baltic States,' in Roucek, ed., *Contemporary Europe*, p. 445.

²² *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 November 1939.

In the social structure there was an important intelligentsia comprising, for the most part, persons of the liberal professions (50 per cent), and a large number of persons in industry and trade (20 per cent), as well as in commerce (20 per cent), whose holdings formed a considerable portion of the Estonian national wealth.²³

III

The Latvian constitution of 15 February 1922 contained no special mention of the rights of national minorities. But previously enacted laws permitted minorities to use their language in court.²⁴ The Law of Scholastic Autonomy of 18 December 1919 provided that the administration of the schools of each minority be placed under a head official nominated by the minority, and under a special council.²⁵ Each minority group received for its school needs a certain part of the state budget.²⁶ Of the total German school budget 60.9 per cent was paid by the state, the remainder by the minority group itself.²⁷

As was the case in Estonia, German social predominance in Latvia received a crushing blow from the land reforms of 1920. Out of 6,671,700 acres or 48 per cent of the total land in Latvia owned by Germans, only 162,520 acres or 1.3 per cent²⁸ were retained in small residual estates ranging in size from 125 to 250 acres. At the end of 1939, there were only 1,700 German agricultural homesteads in Latvia, totaling 160,000 acres.²⁹ Compensation for the expropriated land had been provided for, in principle, by the Latvian Constituent Assembly, but a law enacted in April 1924 abrogated the right to compensation. Some 5,000

²³ Ibid. 7 November 1939.

²⁴ Bukovsky, comp., *Ustav grazdanskogo Sudoproizvodstva*, p. 91.

²⁵ Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, pp. 408-9.

²⁶ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States*, p. 33.

²⁷ Katelbach, *Niemcy wspoleczne wobec zagadnien narodowosciowych*, p. 346.

²⁸ Schulz, op. cit. pp. 116-17.

²⁹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 November 1939.

peasants and agricultural workers emigrated, mainly to Canada.³⁰

The social and occupational composition of the German minority in Latvia presented a picture similar to that in Estonia. Of the entire group, 84 per cent lived in towns, engaging in industry and crafts (31 per cent), in commerce (27 per cent), and in the liberal professions (26 per cent), and filling a vitally important place in the economic life of the country.³¹

From 1929, and particularly after May 1934 when a *coup d'état* established a totalitarian regime, the Latvian government reduced the rights of all minorities rather considerably. A decree issued in June 1934 provided that in families in which the father or the mother was a Lett, the children must attend a Lettish school; if the parents belonged to different national minorities, the decisive factor was not to be the usual language of the family, but the father's nationality. Under another decree issued at the same time, the Lettish language was declared the only language to be used in all government and municipal institutions. In July 1934 the special education boards for various nationalities were abolished.

Shaping its economic policy along similarly nationalistic lines, the state assumed control of a number of the most important fields of economic activity with a view to their transfer to Lettish hands at the expense of the minorities. During the 1934-7 period the Germans especially were agitated by this policy, which curtailed the power that had been theirs in several branches of economic life. Government pressure on the Germans, however, was slightly eased during the next two years; the growing might of the Third Reich and its championship of German minority interests throughout Europe compelled utmost caution. The German population of Latvia, on the other hand, adopted a more and more pro-Nazi orientation, a tendency substantially fostered

³⁰ Schulz, *op. cit.* p. 119.

³¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 November 1939.

by Reich funds and propaganda, and acutely resented by the nationalistic Latvian government.³²

In the circumstances, relations between Latvia and the Third Reich became increasingly strained. A booklet published in Berlin in 1938 contains undisguised threats of political and economic reprisals against Latvia should that country dare to continue its policy with regard to the German minority.³³ At the same time, leading Latvian circles began to voice their insistent warning against the pro-Nazi Germans in their midst. A. Behrsins, chairman of the Latvian *Industrie und Handelskammer*, declared early in 1939 that the Latvian state's attitude toward its non-Latvian population was one of utmost caution, 'and perhaps especially toward those who live in this country, who owe it their subsistence, who hypocritically profess their love for it, but whose allegiance, ideas, sympathies and innermost desires lie outside this country.'³⁴ The semi-official Latvian paper *Brīva Zeme* wrote warningly that in so far as National Socialism existed in Latvia, it could be only purely Latvian: 'We categorically reject the pretension of the Germans in Latvia to mediate between the German and the Latvian peoples.'³⁵

IV

While trying to cope with the internal problems created by the German minority groups and their effect on foreign policy, Estonia and Latvia were also harassed by increased political pressure on the part of the Soviet Union. The area occupied by the Baltic states had always played an important role in Russian strategy and economy, and in the tense international situation prevailing in 1938 and 1939, the importance of this area became

³² Wolfram Gottlieb, 'The Baltic States without Germans,' in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, April 1940, p. 436.

³³ Gloger, op. cit. pp. 137-58.

³⁴ *Deutsche Arbeit*, March 1939, p. 96.

³⁵ Quoted in *Der Deutsche im Osten*, March 1939, p. 69.

even more crucial. Soviet policy spared no effort to draw the Baltic states into its sphere of military and political influence.

Although the pressure of Soviet Russia on one side and the Third Reich on the other threatened the independence and territorial integrity of the Baltic states, it provided, at the same time, the principal opportunity for these states to preserve the unstable equilibrium of their existence. 'A relative security . . . flowed from the Soviet-German antithesis. As long as Hitler insisted that Bolshevism was the enemy of civilization, the Bolsheviks could be invoked against his aggressions, as he against any deviation in Europe from their ostentatious policy of peace.'³⁶

Both sides made alternate efforts to gain the advantage. The first active steps in this direction were made by Soviet Russia, which assumed the initiative for a joint Anglo-French-Soviet guarantee of the Baltic states' independence.³⁷ This proposal was firmly opposed by Estonia and Latvia on the grounds that it would disturb their neutrality and involve them in complications with Germany. A further reason for their resistance was fear of the intentions of the Soviet Union, who under the guarantee scheme demanded a free hand in the Baltic to protect her interests if and whenever these were threatened.³⁸ England and France finally abandoned the idea of imposing on the Baltic states a guarantee they did not seek.

Efforts to withstand the pressure of Nazi Germany proved less successful. On 28 April 1939 Hitler proposed that Latvia and Estonia conclude non-aggression treaties with the Reich. For six weeks the two small countries tried every means at their disposal to avoid signing such agreements. But the occupation of Memel by the Germans demonstrated the futility of resistance to Hitler's

³⁶ Reddaway, *Problems of the Baltic*, p. 37.

³⁷ *New International Year Book*, 1939, p. 231.

³⁸ Apse, *The Baltic States*, p. 76.

demands, and on 7 June, Latvia and Estonia signed.³⁹ It looked now as if Germany had won a springboard for further expansion.

But ensuing events radically changed the whole international picture. On 23 August the Soviet-German non-aggression pact was signed in Moscow and the Soviet Union became the deciding factor in the Baltic region.⁴⁰ That this pact involved a delimitation of spheres of interest, with Germany renouncing all influence in Estonia and Latvia, was officially admitted by German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in his statement of 23 June 1941, following the German attack on the Soviet.⁴¹ Thus the Baltic states found themselves confronted with an entirely new and much less maneuverable situation.

Interpreting the new agreements very broadly, the Soviet government immediately adopted an active and aggressive policy with regard to the Baltic states. Estonia was forced to sign a mutual assistance pact on 29 September; Latvia followed suit six days later. Both countries thus became virtual military and political satellites of the Soviet Union. But unaware of the actual terms of the German-Soviet treaty, the two Baltic states cherished the faint hope that Soviet policy had exceeded the concessions granted by Germany and that German counter-pressure would help them preserve at least some shred of their national independence. They regarded their German minorities as the logical pretext for eventual intervention on the part of the Reich.

Such hope could endure only a very few days. On 6 October Hitler delivered the Reichstag speech that marked the beginning of the era of evacuation and repatriation of German minority groups. The new policy became effective immediately after its proclamation, and Estonia and Latvia were to serve as testing grounds. On 7 October the German envoys at Tallinn and Riga

³⁹⁻⁴⁰ The full text of the treaties appears in *Documents on the Origin of the War* published by the German Foreign Office, 1939, pp. 239-41, 242.

⁴¹ *New York Times*, 23 June 1941.

informed the governments of Estonia and Latvia that the Reich wished to proceed with the evacuation of its *Volksgenossen*.

An article published in the *Bulletin of International News* in March 1940 stated that 'the general belief was that the withdrawal [of the German Balts from the Baltic states] was part of the agreement with Russia for the division of spheres of interest.'⁴² This 'general belief' found expression in a number of influential organs of the press in both belligerent and neutral nations. The Riga correspondent of the London *Times* categorically asserted that 'the removal was part of a secret agreement with the Soviet government for the definite' abdication of the German influence in the Baltic as a condition for the provision of Soviet gold, needed for the purchase of Swedish ore and for other urgent purposes, to the Reich.'⁴³ According to the *New York Times* of 10 October 1939 'a dispatch from Moscow asserted that the exodus was taking place not on German initiative, but on the Soviet's own demand. The Soviet Union was said to be determined not to permit the possibility of the rising of a cry of oppressed German minorities at some future time to justify an attempt by Germany to recover influence in the Baltic States.'⁴⁴

Conviction was also expressed that the Soviet pacts with Estonia and Latvia had provided for rapid sovietization of these two countries and that the hurried repatriation of Baltic Germans was due to the desire of the Reich to spare its people the experience of living under a Soviet regime, as well as to the dread of the German minorities on that same score.⁴⁵ The haste with

⁴² M. B., 'German Minorities . . .' (cited above), p. 288.

⁴³ *The Times*, London, 16 October 1939.

⁴⁴ See also Glen, *Von Ribbentrop is Still Dangerous*, p. 254.

⁴⁵ Perret, *Finlande en guerre*, pp. 85-6; *L'Œuvre*, 9 October 1939.

which the evacuation was effected supported that kind of conjecture.

On 13 October, the Soviet news agency, Tass, bitterly complained that certain newspapers, including the London *Daily Express* and *Daily Herald* and the *New York Times*, and certain news agencies, such as Havas and Exchange Telegraph, were 'indulging in various fabrications regarding the reasons of the urgency of the German government's measures' and 'attempted to establish a connection between the migrations of certain Germans from Latvia and Estonia and the mutual assistance pact concluded between the USSR and the Baltic States.'⁴⁶ This connection was categorically and repeatedly denied by the three interested parties—the Baltic states, Germany, and the Soviet Union.

In a speech on 14 October 1939, the Latvian president and dictator, Karl Ulmanis, declared: 'Malevolent inventions are being circulated according to which the departure of Germans is connected with the Latvian-Soviet pact. That this assertion is unfounded can be gathered from the fact that repatriations have begun in the countries which had no such pacts. Germans return to Germany independently of any circumstance but the wish of the German government.'⁴⁷ The Estonian government paper, *Päevaleht*, emphasized in its leading article of 11 October that the departure of Germans and the Soviet-Estonian agreement were entirely unrelated.

The German Foreign Office published an elaborate statement emphasizing that 'the German repatriation scheme testified to the absence of any intention of using Germans living abroad for imperialist ends and that urgency in the measures was dictated solely by Germany's present need for settling Germans in the eastern regions she has acquired.' The official Soviet communique of 13 October fully endorsed the German version and added:

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, 14 October 1939.

⁴⁷ *Izvestia*, 19 October 1939.

'The above explanation by the official German organs shows that the evacuation of Germans to Germany is being conducted solely at the instance of the German government and dictated by the above stated considerations of the German State.'⁴⁸

In explaining its repatriation policy, the Reich emphasized the peaceable trend of its new political line: evacuation of the minority groups would eliminate a possible bone of contention between Germany and the countries of evacuation. Dr. Hans Hohenstein dwelt at length on this concept:

In the recent past, the German element in Latvia and Estonia formed a conflict-creating splinter in the midst of an alien population. In the long run, despite its historical merit beyond the borders of the Reich, the Baltic outpost of *Deutschtum* has become a permanent source of conflict. The positive forces in the Baltic *Deutschtum*, which still retain their spirit of national self-assertion and have never yielded to assimilation into an alien state organism, can be more successful in performing a task for the Great German Reich within the frame of a far-reaching new order in Europe if they are liberated from their present state ties and rendered useful in a different way.⁴⁹

Many organs of the European and American press had a tendency to explain the new evacuation policy of the Reich with regard to the Baltic Germans as motivated primarily, if not exclusively, by financial and mercantile considerations. 'If one realizes that the return to the Reich of Baltic barons alone has brought to Germany over 1.5 billion gold francs, which means over 20 billion actual francs, one could grasp at once the meaning of that colossal operation of ethnic transfers,' wrote Genevieve Tabouis in *L'Œuvre* (Paris).⁵⁰ She was not alone in her grandiose appraisal of the profit the Reich would derive. Other commentators set the figure variously at 1.5 billion marks (600.9 million dol-

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, 14 October 1939.

⁴⁹ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 11 October 1939.

⁵⁰ *L'Œuvre*, 12 October 1939.

lars),⁵¹ 80 million to 100 million pounds (354.4 to 443 million dollars),⁵² and 160 million pounds (708.8 million dollars).⁵³ In April 1940, Nicolas Politis estimated the value of the property abandoned by the Germans in the Baltic countries at 23 billion to 30 billion francs (478.4 to 624 million dollars), of which 17 to 18 billions (353.6 to 374.4 million dollars) were in Latvia alone.⁵⁴

Further developments revealed that these estimates were greatly exaggerated. But even if that had not been so, it would be erroneous to ascribe Hitler's decision on the evacuation of Germans from Latvia and Estonia to purely financial reasons. Such considerations as the need to colonize the incorporated Polish regions with Germans and to cement friendly relations with the Soviet Union undoubtedly weighed more heavily in his decision. Logically, it appears more than probable that the evacuation was conceived and executed as a guarantee of the sincere intentions of the Reich to cede all claims to her former sphere of influence to Soviet Russia. A proposal to evacuate all German minority groups was the best reply the Reich could give to a natural question from the Soviet government regarding the integrity of the Reich's pledge to abstain from interference in Baltic affairs.

On the whole, out of the bias and ambiguity of press and official comment emerges the impression referred to in an earlier chapter that Soviet pressure for the transfer undoubtedly played a greater role than German official pronouncements would suggest. In any event, the reasons for the support granted the evacuation by both of the larger nations were many and complex.

The ready acceptance of the operation by the governments of the two Baltic countries is more easily understood. In the first place, neither Estonia nor Latvia was in a position to voice pro-

⁵¹ *Basler Nachrichten*, 11 October 1939.

⁵² M. B., 'German Minorities . . .' (cited above), p. 288.

⁵³ *Posledniya Novosti*, 28 October 1939; *New York Times*, 25 October 1939.

⁵⁴ Politis, 'Le Transfert de Populations,' in *Politique Étrangère*, April 1940, p. 84.

rest, even if they had regarded the exodus of the Germans as wholly undesirable. As soon as their powerful neighbors had reached the decision, they had no choice but to accept it. Indeed, once it became clear that the presence of the German minorities could no longer be counted on as a weapon in their fight for independence of the Soviet Union, the prospect of ridding their lands of the Germans altogether seemed the long-desired solution to the German problem. Latvian press comment on the evacuation of the Germans from the South Tyrol reveals that the idea of repatriation had occurred to them as a possible answer before it became at all imminent.⁵⁵

Actually, German predominance in the Baltic states no longer existed. Agrarian reforms, nationalization of the state economy, cultural emancipation—all these had gone far to free the native Latvians and Estonians from the economic and spiritual hegemony held by the Germans for so many centuries. Nevertheless the Germans still continued to occupy prominent positions in trade, industry, and the liberal professions, a situation which gave rise to anxiety, jealousy, and indignation in various Lettish and Estonian circles and to constant concern on the part of the two governments. Elimination of the Germans from these positions through free competition was a lengthy and difficult task. The pseudo-legal discriminatory methods that had proved so successful elsewhere with regard to the Jews appeared too risky in the light of the Reich policy of protecting Germans abroad.⁵⁶

Thus the immediate evacuation of the Germans seemed, on the whole, the best and happiest way out. The Baltic states 'greeted the withdrawal of the Balts as the good news of a bad day. It was the silver lining to the dark red cloud of Soviet war-ships and troops coming to the wrested naval and military bases.'⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Gottlieb, *op. cit.* p. 437.

⁵⁶ Jackson, *Estonia*, p. 29.

⁵⁷ Williams, *Riddle of the Reich*, pp. 170-71.

V

Transfer of the Germans from Estonia and Latvia

I

ON 7 October 1939, Dr. Hans Frohwein, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the German Reich, opened negotiations with Johannes Markus, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Estonia, on the resettlement of the Estonian Germans. Eight days later a 'Protocol on the Resettlement to the German Reich of the German Folk Group of Estonia' was signed.¹ Estonian ratification was included in the text of the agreement (Article 5); the Reich ratified on the following day.

It was no accident that the German-Estonian agreement was called a protocol rather than a treaty. The accord was actually nothing more than a protocol setting forth in very general outlines the procedure for the departure of the Germans and the liquidation of their property. It established no general principles or motives as guides for the two governments. It did not even include the basic element of every treaty—an explicit statement of the obligations of the contracting parties.

The protocol opened with the definition of the categories of persons who could claim release from Estonian citizenship and its military obligations, and then set forth the technical procedure of this release. There was not a word about Estonia's obligation to release her Germans; the Reich's obligations to accept as citizens those released from Estonia were stated (Article 7:1), but

¹ The official text was published in Estonian and German in the Estonian official gazette, *Riigi Teataja*, 1939, II, pp. 341-6.

only in very veiled terms. The protocol was thus an elementary and embryonic agreement on evacuation. Many questions remained open; others required special additional agreements for their solution.

The first statement with regard to the impending evacuation of the German minority was issued on 7 October. That very day German transport ships dropped anchor in the Estonian ports of Tallinn, Kuressaare (Arensburg), and Pärnu (Pernau), and prepared for the embarkation of the repatriates. Two days later, a commission arrived by air from Berlin, bringing with it files, registers, and lists—all prepared beforehand, and containing the names of some 6,500 Germans in Tallinn and of about 2,700 in Tartu.² The first repatriation ship sailed on 13 October with *Reichsdeutsche* or stateless persons, for whose evacuation the formal completion of the agreement with Estonia was not necessary.³ Meanwhile, Estonian citizens of German ethnic origin who had opted for repatriation had been grouped in special camps pending their departure. On 18 October, three days after the protocol was signed, the steamship *Utlandshoern* left Tallinn with 464 repatriates, more than 30 per cent of them *Reichsdeutsche*. The rest were Estonian Germans, mostly from the provinces. The tempo of the evacuation can be best demonstrated by the following list of sailings from Tallinn: ⁴

- October 18—*Utlandshoern*—464 resettlers
- October 19—*Der Deutsche*—911 resettlers
- October 21—*Oldenburg*—964 resettlers
- October 22—*Eider*—463 resettlers
- October 24—*Sierra Cordoba*—1,007 resettlers
- October 25—*Orotawa*—590 resettlers
- October 27—*Der Deutsche*—996 resettlers

² *La France*, 16 October 1939.

³ According to police records, 1,500 *Reichsdeutsche* and 300 German citizens of other countries lived in Estonia in 1936. See Werner Giere, 'Bestandsaufnahme des estländischen Deutschtums,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, January 1937, p. 17.

⁴ *Revalsche Zeitung*, 16 November 1939.

October 28—*Oceana*—815 resettlers
October 30—*Sierra Cordoba*—1,109 resettlers
November 2—*Der Deutsche*—1,131 resettlers
November 4—*Oceana*—863 resettlers
November 6—*Sierra Cordoba*—955 resettlers
November 15—*Sierra Cordoba*—318 resettlers

A total of 10,586 persons left Estonia from the port of Tallinn alone, on seven ships which made two, three, and even four voyages. The evacuation of the German minority was virtually completed in the twenty-eight days between 18 October and 15 November. According to the official Estonian lists of persons who lost Estonian citizenship in connection with the evacuation, 11,760 repatriates left Estonia before the end of 1939.⁵ About 900 German residents in Estonia, who were not Estonian citizens, are not included in this total.⁶

Thus the first and most urgent phase of the evacuation was brought to an end. Only those Germans who had refrained from opting in favor of the Reich, or who were detained in connection with the liquidation of their property, remained in the country. Repatriation of the latter relatively insignificant group took more time than the evacuation of the great body of Germans. This eventuality had been anticipated by the German-Estonian protocol: 'The persons who must remain a longer time in Estonia in order to avoid an unduly hasty liquidation of business affairs connected with the resettlement will enjoy the privileges extended by this protocol for a period of three months. A list of affected persons will be presented in due course' (Article 1:8).

The three-month period of grace stipulated in the protocol expired on 15 January 1940. It was not possible, however, to complete the evacuation by that date; therefore Estonia and the Reich concluded a new agreement extending to 7 March 1940

⁵ *Nation und Staat*, June 1940, p. 307.

⁶ *Revue Baltique*, February 1940, p. 145.

the deadline for resettlement of the 1,000 Germans, more or less, who had stayed behind to liquidate their business interests.⁷ On 29 March 1940, Berlin published a statement according to which the 'last Germans have left Estonia; the evacuation has been completed.'⁸ But on 9 May the *Baltic Times* reported that between the 15th and 18th of that month the steamship *Der Deutsche* would embark the 'last' 400 to 500 Germans and their movable property. Three weeks later, a spokesman for the Estonian Ministry of the Interior reported that in the last stages of repatriation some Balts who had already filed repatriation papers were trying to renounce their expressed intention.⁹ It is evident from these reports that not even the 7 March deadline was met.

These references to the 'last' Germans undoubtedly meant only the remnants of that great majority of Germans in Estonia who had opted for repatriation. For aside from this group, there were those who, in the words of the *New York Times* correspondent, Otto D. Tolischus, refused 'to leave the butterland for the motherland.'¹⁰ The general census of 1934 gave the number of Germans in Estonia as 16,346. According to official German figures the number of Germans who left Estonia totaled 12,900. Thus, nearly 3,500 Germans, or approximately 21 per cent of the total, had not chosen to return to Germany.

This was a severe blow to the Reich leaders, who viewed it as a dangerous precedent for the future. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of 25 November attempted to minimize the implications of the situation by revising its estimate of the number of Germans who had lived in Estonia; it now put the figure at 14,000, although only four weeks before it had set it at 20,000 to 25,000. Those who refused to leave Estonia, according to the paper, were the 'persons who for many years had stayed apart from all Germans

⁷ *Baltic Times*, 4 January 1940.

⁸ *Posledniya Novosti*, 30 March 1940.

⁹ *Baltic Times*, 30 May 1940.

¹⁰ *New York Times*, 25 October 1939.

and therefore had not been carried away with the general tide of repatriation.’¹¹

II

Compared with the German-Estonian protocol, the German-Latvian treaty, concluded on 30 October, was a far more elaborate and complete contract. The negotiations at Riga lasted three and a half weeks in contrast to the six-day conference at Tallinn, with both parties utilizing the German-Estonian experience in their deliberations. Two documents embodied the results of the Riga talks: the first, and basic, one was entitled, ‘Treaty on the Resettlement of Latvian Citizens of German [Ethnic] Nationality in the German Reich of October 30, 1939,’ and the second, ‘Additional Protocol on the Resettlement of Latvian Citizens of German [Ethnic] Nationality in the German Reich.’¹²

The basic treaty contained general principles concerning the transfer of persons and their property; the additional protocol dealt at length, though somewhat equivocally, with the practical details necessary for their implementation. Unlike the Tallinn protocol, this was a real treaty containing a clear declaration of the obligations assumed by the parties—the Latvian government’s obligation to release from citizenship, and the Reich’s obligation to accept as citizens, the affected category of Latvian citizens of German nationality. The preamble to the treaty included a statement of the motives that prompted the Reich to conclude this accord: the desire to group all persons of German nationality within the borders of the Reich. The positive rather than the negative impulse was given the emphasis; this was to be a repatriation rather than an evacuation.

¹¹ Inasmuch as the number of mixed marriages among Estonian Germans was considerable (‘Krisis im baltischen Deutschtum,’ in *Kulturwehr*, 1931, Heft 3), it is noteworthy that neither German nor foreign sources mentioned the presence of non-German elements among the Estonian evacuees.

¹² Official texts were published in the Latvian official gazette, *Valdības Vestnesis*, 30 October 1939, pp. 4-7.

Two distinct periods mark the course of the exodus of the Germans from Latvia: first, a preparatory phase which proved to be disproportionately long; and the second, the actual evacuation, which was completed by the deadline set by the treaty, although not without difficulties. The slow tempo of the first phase can in no way be attributed to the Reich, which completed all preparations with its usual rapidity. The Germans in Riga received the first notification of the pending resettlement on Sunday, 8 October. On the same day, a German commission headed by Minister Plenipotentiary Twardowsky and including Reichsbank and Economic Ministry experts arrived in Riga.¹³ A day later it was reported that German transport ships were in the ports of Riga, Liepaja (Libau), and Ventspils (Windau), and that the steamship *Friedericke* was to leave that night with the first group of repatriates.¹⁴ On 11 October ten ships were reported crowding the Riga docks with others waiting their turn offshore.¹⁵

'It soon developed, however,' wrote Tolischus to the *New York Times* two weeks later, 'that such an evacuation was no simple matter, involving as it does many personal and economic problems not only for the would-be emigrants but also for the states concerned, which can be settled only by interstate treaties.'¹⁶ Unlike Estonia, which left some points undecided, the Latvian government refused to allow the departure of its German citizens until a method for the settlement of all questions of property was agreed upon.¹⁷ Only those German residents of Latvia who were not Latvian citizens, but nationals of the Reich and of other countries, or stateless, had the indisputable right to leave Latvia independently of the negotiations in progress. Therefore the steamship *Scharnhorst*, which left

¹³ *New York Times*, 10 October 1939.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 9 October 1939.

¹⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 October 1939.

¹⁶ *New York Times*, 25 October 1939.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 21 October 1939.

Riga on 14 October, carried only 488 repatriates although she had space for 900 passengers. On a second call at Riga, the *Scharnhorst* took on 450 *Reichsdeutsche*. The bulk of the Latvian citizens of German ethnic nationality were compelled to wait until the end of the negotiations.

This unforeseen delay threatened to wreck the entire enterprise by nullifying the psychological advantages of the blitzkrieg tempo. Taken by surprise, the overwhelming majority of the Latvian Germans reacted favorably to the repatriation appeal; without much deliberation they decided to return to the Reich, sold their possessions in a hurry and for a mere fraction of their value, and made themselves ready for an immediate departure. But those who had to await the conclusion of the treaty, living in empty apartments with their packed luggage around them, had time to regret their hasty decision. A Havas cable from Riga, dated 18 October, reported that because of the delay in the evacuation 'discontent is growing among Latvian Germans. Many are refusing to wind up their business, others are reversing their decision to resettle. Street fights between the supporters and opponents of the resettlement are not infrequent.'¹⁸ Even discounting the possible anti-German bias of a French press agency account, it may be considered an established fact that a three-week delay in what had been planned as a speedy operation must have created serious difficulties.

When concluded, the treaty bore witness to the intention 'to conclude the resettlement as a single operation' (Preamble) and stipulated that 'after reception of the certificate of release, the resettlers must leave Latvia before 15 December 1939' (Article 4). The representatives of the Reich had conflicting aims with regard to the deadline set for the evacuation. On the one hand, they favored an early date in order to create an atmosphere of urgency among the German population; on the other, they were

¹⁸ *Posledniya Novosti*, 19 October 1939.

fully cognizant of the difficulties inherent in a speedy mass evacuation and they wanted sufficient time to assure the most favorable conditions for protecting the Reich interests. The original draft of the treaty, presented by the Embassy of the Reich in Riga on 11 October, contained provisions for an evacuation period of more than five months, ending on 31 March 1940. *Valdibas Vestnesis* promptly reported that there was no reason to believe that the Latvian government would accept such a proposal. 'It is undesirable,' stated the gazette, 'that the abnormal situation with which we have been faced these past days should be continued and that people should be made prey to all sorts of influences and rumors. It is also undesirable that government bodies be long occupied with the settlement of questions which have been raised *without the wish of the Latvian government*.' ¹⁹ The deadline, therefore, was set at 15 December and it was necessary for the Germans to make haste.

The treaty was not ratified until 7 November,²⁰ but three days earlier the German transport ship *Steuben* left Riga with the first group of Latvian citizens. The ship, which normally carried about 1,800 tourists, accepted 2,856 repatriates,²¹ and more transports followed in rapid succession. The physical aspects of the transfer presented no insuperable obstacles.

Substantial difficulties were encountered, however, in attempting a speedy liquidation of property. Five days before the scheduled departure of the last transport ship, a number of Germans were not ready to leave, and on 8 December they asked the German Ambassador in Riga to obtain a postponement of the deadline until 15 May 1940. An anonymous letter received by the Ambassador read:

One cannot ask all Germans to draw a line under the past in 45 days and to leave their old homeland before they have first

¹⁹ *Valdibas Vestnesis*, 12 October 1939.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 28 February 1940.

²¹ *The Times*, London, 7 November 1939.

settled their affairs honestly and without nervous strain. A resettlement of 70,000 Germans in 45 days is altogether impossible and beyond everyone's comprehension. It has already led to countless tragedies. We must trust that a prolongation [of the evacuation period] will serve the interests not only of the Greater German Reich but also the Latvian state, and, above all, will help those Germans who for various reasons would otherwise have to stay here. . .²²

The Ambassador, however, refused categorically to intervene on behalf of those who sought a deferment, declaring that any delay would be contrary to the plans of both governments and that 'the two contracting parties fully realized that the contemplated operation was a painful one and one which claimed sacrifices from both parties. For precisely this reason . . . they decided . . . to set a necessary limit for this operation in accordance with a number of technical factors, and not to overstep it, because it is undeniably true that a painful decision does not become less painful through postponement.'

Even admittedly irreplaceable owners and employees of business enterprises whose operation was to be continued were not permitted to delay their departure.²³ Thus the repatriation went on at the same rapid tempo, and by midnight of 15 December the number of persons who had left Latvia as a result of the Latvian-German treaty reached 47,810.²⁴ Since the total number of repatriates from Latvia did not exceed 48,641, it appears that only about 830 of those who chose to leave failed to meet the requirements of the treaty.

The purely technical organization of the evacuation deserves special attention, for it functioned with exceptional ease. The administrative personnel was recruited almost exclusively among the local Baltic Germans. This was possible, according to a Ger-

²² This letter was quoted in full in the German Ambassador's reply which appeared in *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

²³ *Valdības Vestnesis*, 23 November 1939.

²⁴ *La France*, 17 October 1939.

man commentator, because 'the Baltic Germans were so united in their German *Volksgemeinschaft* [folk community] and had such efficient leadership that they were able to take over completely the handling of all repatriation measures. The Reich merely sent its ships to the ports of departure and took its countrymen away.'²⁵

An initial attempt to build up the entire organization on a wholly voluntary basis did not produce the desired results; thus, mobilization was decreed for all males between twenty and twenty-six, all doctors under sixty, lawyers under sixty-five, and nurses under forty-nine.²⁶ These groups were especially useful in the towns and won high praise as the 'agencies which made possible the harmonious performance of that tremendous organizational task.'²⁷ Further tribute was paid them by Alfred Intelmann, president of the *Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft*, and Landesleiter Dr. Erhard Kröger, who went so far as to say that the transfer could not have been accomplished without their help.²⁸ Precise data concerning the numerical strength of this improvised machinery are lacking, but it appears that the group carried through a difficult assignment in exemplary fashion, working uninterruptedly until the end of the evacuation period.

Both German and foreign sources indicate that the actual departures were effected without complications. The Reich sent the necessary number of ships, and although the first ones were much overcrowded, later sailings took only the number for which accommodations were available. The order of departure was carefully arranged. Each evacuee was given a ticket bearing the name of the ship and date of departure. Luggage was usually brought on board on the eve of sailing and the evacuees em-

²⁵ Alfred Thoss, 'Das grosse Werk der Umsiedlung' in *Volk und Reich*, 1941, Heft 1, p. 62.

²⁶ *The Times*, London, 11 November 1939.

²⁷ Heinrich Bosse, 'Das Aufbauwerk der baltendeutschen Jugend,' in *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 24 January 1940.

²⁸ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

barked without hurry or delay. Special ships were reserved for the sick, the mentally deranged, and for criminals. The only incident worthy of mention in the course of the entire evacuation was the discovery of an incendiary bomb aboard the *Sierra Cordoba* just after it had left Riga on 9 December.²⁹ Intensified precautions barred a repetition of the occurrence.³⁰

When it first became known that the Reich intended to repatriate its minorities, the *Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft* in Latvia published a statement expressing the hope that the Germans, despite their long connection with the Baltic lands, would show themselves worthy of this great historic moment and would respond unanimously to the appeal of the Führer.³¹ These hopes were hardly fulfilled. Option in favor of the evacuation started off apace. Inscription of the optants began on 1 November, two days after the signing of the treaty, and in the first two days 1,500 families voted to return to the Reich. By the sixth day, 6,000 persons had opted and received certificates for departure. The number of optants reached 10,000 on 9 November, 17,000 on 13 November, and 20,000 on 15 November.³² At that point, the German press abruptly halted publication of figures on the option. During the final month, fewer optants registered each day, and apparently, more strenuous efforts were required to win over each new group of prospective resettlers.

According to the 1935 census, 62,144 Germans lived in Latvia. Official German figures record that 48,641 persons were evacuated in the 1939-40 transfer. Therefore, at least 13,500 or 21.7 per cent chose to remain. In Latvia as in Estonia, not all the Germans heeded the Führer's summons.

Moreover, a considerable number of persons who were not of German ethnic nationality left the country with the Germans

²⁹ Ibid. 13 December 1939.

³⁰ Ibid. 11 December 1939.

³¹ Text appears in *Der Volksdeutsche*, November 1939.

³² *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5, 10, 14, 16 November 1939.

by using the facilities offered for the evacuation. Indications to this effect may be found in German and non-German sources. According to the *Latvian Information Bulletin* of 31 January 1940, 887 persons of non-German nationality and individuals not possessing national passports availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire German citizenship through evacuation. Letters published in *Baltenbriefe zur Rückkehr ins Reich* report a rush on the part of a great portion of the Latvian intelligentsia to obtain evacuation certificates.³³

According to Professor M. Laserson, former deputy of the Latvian Parliament and an authority on the subject, the Russian and Latvian names that appeared periodically on *Valdibas Vestnesis* lists of those who lost their Latvian citizenship in connection with the evacuation were mainly those of Latvian and Russian Orthodox-Sectant families who had been thoroughly assimilated by the German minority and had adopted the German language and culture. Yet strictly speaking, they were not *Volksdeutsche*, and in granting them evacuation certificates, the German administration in Latvia was guilty of violating both the official doctrine of the Reich and the letter and spirit of the treaty with Latvia.

³³ *Baltenbriefe zur Rückkehr ins Reich*, pp. 28-9, 35. This small volume of letters written by German evacuees from Estonia and Latvia was issued in Hitlerite Germany by a Nazi publisher, and was, of course, intended purely for propaganda. Far from being spontaneous, the letters were 'ordered' by the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* in Poznan, which arranged a competition among the resettlers for 'descriptions of the resettlement experience.' The prospective authors were promised that the best reports would be published and paid for, and although the repatriates were advised that they were free to choose their own subjects, a list of some twenty topics was furnished for their guidance. (*Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 6 and 7 February 1940.) Obviously any letters that censured the evacuation plan, its conduct, or its results were excluded from the book. All the published letters are imbued with patriotic fervor for the Führer's wisdom, and enthusiasm for the evacuation policy. For this reason, the unconscious indications of personal dissatisfaction with the technical and economic difficulties of the transfer and the problems of re-establishment in new places—revelations that escaped the censor's eye—are the more valuable. Discriminately used, these letters constitute a useful human document.

III

Approximately three-fourths of the German population of Estonia and Latvia responded to Hitler's appeal, some hesitantly and with misgivings, others unquestioningly and with enthusiasm. What prompted these thousands of men and women, whose forebears had lived in the Baltic areas for centuries, and who were themselves an organic part of the national life, to abandon their property, their homes, and their work for an insecure future in an alien land, is a difficult question to answer. There are always imponderables which, in the last analysis, turn the scale. But in this case there are clearly discernible tangible pressures as well, both negative and positive, which supply at least some of the motives.

One of the major negative factors was the Germans' sense of futility about their further existence as a minority group in the Baltic, inasmuch as their long-cherished dream of a historic mission in these regions had become incapable of fulfilment. The oldest mouthpiece of the German minority in Latvia, *Rigasche Rundschau*, wrote on 21 October 1939: 'Our position [in Latvia] lost its historical stamp when the governmental power—and with it the external responsibility—was given into the hands of the native majority population. Following this shift, our position became increasingly weaker and less tenable as the years passed. Not only figuratively but actually we were losing ground, and although it was hardly noticeable to us at the time, our historic mission had become a struggle for a shrinking inheritance of a great past.' Bitterness and the wounded pride of a recently all-powerful minority ring clearly in these words.

John Hampden Jackson, an attentive and unbiased observer, stated in 1941, that in Estonia 'the Balts will always be remembered as a *Herrenvolk*; their tragedy is that they could not face life as anything other than a *Herrenvolk*. The role of junior

partner with full cultural autonomy in an Estonian Republic was not one which they had it in them to fulfill.' ³⁴

Frequent expressions of the hardships of their present existence and hopelessness about the future occur in the *Baltenbriefe*. 'Our historical mission in the Baltic has come to an end,' wrote one of the evacuees. 'It is no longer a historical mission if one has to fight for one's mere existence, for a barely sufficient loaf of bread. It is no heroic mission if one faces slow but certain death.' Another summed up the situation in this fashion:

We want to get away from the hopelessness of a life in a country where we are stepchildren, where our neighbors consider us a thorn in their side, where we are condemned to a miserable life on the fringe of society. The return to the Reich is the only way out of this aimless existence, out of this unsympathetic world which watches our downfall with indifference and passivity. . . Eliminated as we are from almost every profession, everywhere handicapped and shoved aside, chased from the lands we owned, robbed of our property and hence poor and defenseless, we Baltic Germans have no alternative but to give up the struggle against a pitiless fate and put all our hopes in the Greater Germany. . . ³⁵

It is difficult to know even now to what degree this desperate conception was justified by the facts. Reduction to a minority status does not necessarily imply the dire economic and social reverses described in these letters. In any case, all such references to the inevitability and expedience of the collective evacuation as a way out of the dilemma date from October 1939 or later. In the extensive German literature devoted to the Baltic Germans and published just prior to the evacuation, there was no hint of the impossibility of submission to an intolerable situation, or of withdrawal from the Baltic as an answer. On the very eve of their departure the Balts had not the slightest foreknowledge of the repatriation plan. This is evident from a recurrence in the

³⁴ Jackson, *Estonia*, p. 29.

³⁵ *Baltenbriefe*, pp. 13-14, 19.

Baltenbriefe of such phrases as '... not a man thought of resettlement of the entire Baltic Deutschtum,' and 'Who would have thought only last August that we would go back to the Reich forever?'³⁶

The inescapable conclusion therefore is that the skilful German propagandists capitalized on the latent dissatisfaction among the Balts by offering them what appeared to be an ideal solution to a problem represented as urgent. Artfully formulated and vigorously launched, the case for repatriation found a ready audience among the Baltic Germans. Only thus can the lightning speed with which the prospect captivated their minds and hearts be explained.

An even more effective stimulus for the evacuation, however, was the fear of bolshevization which seized most of the Germans following the conclusion by the two Baltic countries of treaties with the Soviet Union. According to an article in the *Bulletin of International News*, 'the Balts themselves were so terrified of a possible sovietization of the Baltic states that a large portion of them acquiesced' to Hitler's summons.³⁷ The *London Times* of 13 October 1939 reported that 'it is said that the governments of these countries [Latvia and Estonia] have not exercised any pressure upon the German residents, but the latter have been frightened by German officials into believing that the Soviet regime would be started soon in the Baltic states; the choice before these people was, therefore, between Hitler's regime and the Soviet one.'

The German press did not maintain its usual unanimity on this question. A Havas dispatch of 10 October reported that whereas the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* was attempting to prove that the resettlement of the Baltic Germans was in no way prompted by the fear of sovietization of Latvia and Estonia, but solely by the

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 53, 17.

³⁷ M. B., 'German Minorities in Europe,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 9 March 1940, p. 288.

desire to settle them in the German Polish territories, the *Kölnische Zeitung* was claiming that the Baltic Germans were panicky about the Soviet penetration of these countries and wanted to flee to escape Russian cruelty. Baltic correspondents of the *Telegraaf* (Amsterdam) also reported that, whatever line German propaganda took, the Baltic Germans agreed to evacuation only because of their fear of bolshevization.³⁸

In this connection, the *Greuelpropaganda* (propaganda of horror) conducted by the political leaders of the German minority, and even more strenuously by the German clergy, played a not unimportant role in the decisions taken by the majority of the Baltic Germans. 'Nazi agents,' wrote Jackson, 'let it be known in Estonia that unless the Balts left their homes and took ship at once for German territory, they would be butchered by the incoming Russians, and no German authority would raise a finger to help them. An intense campaign of propaganda spiced with threats was waged in Estonia.'³⁹ 'When Hitler's call was first issued on October 7,' reported Tolischus from Tallinn, 'it was conveyed to the Germans by their local leaders, especially the clergy, in such categorical form and with such hints of dire consequences for those remaining, that it created a regular panic until nearly every German was ready to leave on the spot. Word was passed around that Russians were at the door and that everybody must leave within ten days.'⁴⁰ The Riga correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* also observed on 11 October that 'the rush has been much accelerated by circulation of the wildest and most ridiculous rumors, such as that any Germans remaining will be massacred just as soon as the last ship has departed, and that the Bolsheviks are coming within a month.'

Rigasche Rundschau engaged vigorously in the *Greuelpropaganda* campaign, reaching a climax on 9 December with an

³⁸ *Posledniya Novosti*, 11 October 1939.

³⁹ Jackson, *op. cit.* pp. 27-8.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 24 October 1939.

article warning those Germans who still hesitated to leave that they would ultimately lose all they hoped to save by remaining.

Those who stay behind [the article insisted] will lose their *Volkstum*, they, their children, and their children's children. . . Those who stay behind must face the fact that sooner or later they will be deprived of every possibility to work or to earn, since they are Germans. . . Those who stay behind are, in fact, out of every category; they will never be able to claim citizenship of the Reich and here they are but second-class citizens, for they are losing the protection of the Reich and forfeiting their rights forever. Many believe that they can not give up their beautiful homes and possessions and leave behind all the things to which they are accustomed and so deeply attached. *They will eventually lose this comfort, their possessions, their income; they will lose all that made life possible. For they have not the right to live in this country.* . . Those who stay behind will be despised by their fellow-citizens, they will be regarded with suspicion, and they must not be surprised if they are insulted. There will be joy if they perish. Let them ponder the fate of their children who will have to be brought up among strangers in an alien atmosphere, who will be shunned by their school-mates, and who will never be able to find a place for themselves.

Repatriation propaganda, however, abounded in promises as well as threats. An idyllic future in the annexed Polish regions with emphasis on the purely material advantages was depicted for the wavering resettler. The press printed long dispatches with glowing details of the installation of the first resettlers in the Warthegau, noting the generous land grants to peasants, the need for artisans, and the encouraging prospects for those persons in the liberal professions and trade.⁴¹ Numerous letters from resettlers, reprinted in *Rigasche Rundschau*, described enthusiastically the reception accorded them by the Reich and warmly recommended that those who hesitated follow them at once.⁴²

⁴¹ *Revalsche Zeitung*, 3 December 1939; *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

⁴² *Rigasche Rundschau*, 8 and 12 December 1939.

Precisely what role the power of Hitler's summons played in the evacuees' decisions is not easy to evaluate. Naturally, German press and official comment made much of this angle. From Hans Lutz, leader of the Nazi movement in Estonia, came the clarion call: ' . . . No one should shrink from this [the Führer's] appeal. For us, the situation is clear and precise: the Führer alone can make us decide to abandon the homeland in which we settled many centuries ago and to which we have given a German imprint, in order to assume the Watch in the East and to embark upon a new fight. Compatriots: Be ye worthy of the big task which is ours. . . ' ⁴³

The most immediate and wholehearted response to this bidding undoubtedly came from the German youth in the two Baltic countries. They, like their comrades in the Reich and among other German minority groups abroad, were fervent proponents of National Socialist racial theories and the cult of the Führer. Despite the efforts of the Latvian and Estonian governments in the 1930's to check the growth of the National Socialist movement, the young Germans were well organized.⁴⁴ Although not official Hitlerite bodies, these youth organizations had trained their members in strict discipline and implicit obedience to Hitler's every word and gesture.

The formal education of the young people had also prepared them for National Socialist doctrines. Pan-Germanism, always a dominant theme among the Balts, was especially congenial to German schoolteachers and they had made it the cornerstone of educational policy.

Thus it was entirely logical for the youth to answer the Führer's call without any doubts in regard to the wisdom or

⁴³ *Der Volksdeutsche*, November 1939.

⁴⁴ In 1938 membership in Latvian German youth organizations was estimated at 5,000, and a year later, at 6,000. (H. von Samson, 'Rückblick auf die baltendeutsche Jugendarbeit,' in *Nation und Staat*, February-March 1940, pp. 178-82.)

practicability of the repatriation plan. American press correspondents reported the pro-Hitler younger generation enthusiastic over the transfer and stated that the first to go were the young men of military age.⁴⁵ *Baltenbriefe*, too, despite the phrases obviously coined for propaganda purposes, reflects a genuine eagerness for repatriation. 'The great masses, and especially we, the young people,' wrote one evacuee, 'did not tarry a single moment, since it was the Führer who called us and there could be no greater happiness for us than to respond unreservedly to this appeal.' These sentiments were echoed in another letter: 'The Führer ordered and we obeyed. We are all grateful to the Führer for his having called us back to our Great German Fatherland. . . .' And still another: 'As for us, we could have no hesitation after we heard the Führer's call; it was a matter of course that we should go.'⁴⁶

But if German youth was unreservedly in favor of repatriation, many members of the older generation were ridden by fear and doubt.⁴⁷ They were more attached to their homes and to tradition, less alert and enterprising than the young; some were decidedly skeptical over the National Socialist regime and Hitler's dictatorship. Deep cleavages developed in many families, in some instances the parents flatly refusing to leave their familiar surroundings and letting the young people go away without them, in other cases giving in reluctantly and following their children.⁴⁸

Whatever the private sentiments with which the Germans left their Baltic homeland, their official farewells were tinged with regret and with gratitude to the countries of their long residence.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, 9 and 25 October 1939; *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 October 1939.

⁴⁶ *Baltenbriefe*, pp. 29, 67, 63.

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, 9 and 25 October 1939; *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 October 1939.

⁴⁸ According to official statistics, 14.1 per cent of the Estonian and 10.3 per cent of the Latvian evacuees were over 65 years old.

A farewell message to the *Volksgenossen*, signed by Alfred Intelmann and Dr. Erhard Kröger, stated:

When the ship weighs anchor today, we shall see our old homeland for the last time. This last glance will be one of gratitude, not of reproach. For we must remain grateful for what we are, not only to our people but also to the country that gave us and our fathers an opportunity to conduct a hard and beautiful fight for existence. We shall also bid farewell to the Lettish people. All that has divided us from them will appear small and unimportant from a distance. One thing will remain important: the fact that we, like our fathers, have been able to grow through living together, and through all the tensions arising therefrom.⁴⁹

Arvid von Nottbeck, in his farewell on behalf of the German aldermen of Tallinn, declared: 'From the founding of this town until today, 11 October 1939—that is, for 720 years—the Germans have shared in the building of its government and defense. In good times and bad, through pestilence and famine and wars, the Germans and Estonians have lived together in this town, as children in the same house. . . It is painful for us to go away from this town where our fathers lived, fought and died.'⁵⁰

Statements on the part of the Estonian and Latvian government representatives were not only correct but friendly. Replying to Nottbeck, General Soots, Oberbürgermeister of Tallinn, said: 'Even though there has been some friction between the two peoples, the bad recollections will be erased by time and the good memories will remain. You say that your Führer and your people call you. We do not hold you back. Our best wishes will accompany you in your new life.'⁵¹ The Latvian President, Karl Ulmanis, also expressed the hope that the German folk group would find a successful and happy future in its new fatherland.⁵² And at a farewell dinner to German military and naval officers

⁴⁹ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

⁵⁰ *Revalsche Zeitung*, 12 October 1939.

⁵¹ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

⁵² *Ibid.* 9 December 1939.

who had chosen to give up the Estonian service and citizenship to become Reich citizens, the War Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Estonian army, General Laydoner, remarked: 'We force no one and we hold no one back. We count a number of German officers and privates in our army. The majority of them have resigned. We thank them for their loyal collaboration and wish them much luck in their new fatherland.'⁵³

Baltenbriefe reveals something of the non-official reactions among the middle classes. Discounting the understandable tendency of the Germans to seek comfort in the thought that their departure was regretted by the native population, there still remains substantial evidence that some regret did actually exist. 'Our departure caused sincere regrets among the simple Estonians among the people, among the men in the street,' wrote one of the resettlers; while another commented, 'We were greatly moved by the farewell given us by our neighbors who wished us a happy future. . . So many a modest Estonian took leave of his German co-citizens with tears in his eyes!' And although Latvian-German relations were somewhat more strained, the Lettish attitude toward the departure of the Germans was also described as being tinged with sorrow.⁵⁴

IV

As for the 17,000 Balts—or 'bad Germans,' as the Reich propagandists termed them—who refused to return to Germany, there were various elements swayed by diverse motives. Some, of course, were the older people; others were the young, insufficiently 'patriotic' persons who placed their personal interests and sympathies above the Führer's call.

A powerful factor was the high percentage of mixed mar-

⁵³ *Posledniya Novosti*, 16 October 1939.

⁵⁴ *Baltenbriefe*, pp. 14, 46, 29.

riages,⁵⁵ which led to countless family tragedies. Foreign correspondents who watched the exodus of Germans from Latvia and Estonia wrote frankly: 'The status of persons of mixed marriages is still unclear, though numerous families have been broken up by the reluctance of Lettish and Russian wives to accompany their German husbands.'⁵⁶ 'The number of hasty marriages at Riga has broken all records . . . and divorces and suicides are also recorded.'⁵⁷ Tolischus wrote: 'Many families have been split in quarrels; there have been many emergency marriages but also numerous divorces, and special courts have been set up to facilitate both. . . There is also an increasing number of those, who unable to resolve their doubts and fears, seek escape in suicide.'⁵⁸

A clue to still another possible deterrent to resettlement may be found in a dispatch from Edmund Stevens, Riga correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*. As early as 23 October, Stevens reported that Germans still in Latvia were receiving from their transferred co-nationals 'letters using skillful dodges to pass censorship.' Such letters, which gained considerable currency, were not the glowing accounts of the earliest evacuees to be found in *Baltenbriefe*, but the disillusioned reports of those resettlers who found their situation far from ideal. One letter read, 'We have not seen our old friend Mr. Sviests (Lettish for butter) since we arrived,' while another admitted that 'everything is very nice, but suggest to postpone departure until after Jan's wedding.' This Jan was then two years old. 'These gloomy reports have completely sapped the initial enthusiasm of the Baltic Germans who depart only from a sense of duty,' Stevens concluded.

The most outspoken 'bad Germans' were those who refused to abandon their Baltic homeland for the National Socialist Reich because of their political or other ideological convictions. We

⁵⁵ Handrack, *Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung der deutschen Minderheit in Lettland*, pp. 74-5.

⁵⁶ *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 October 1939.

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, 21 October 1939.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 25 October 1939.

have no information about their numerical strength or the influence they exerted, but the results of the evacuation suggest that they were few and wielded relatively little power. This small group was headed by Dr. Paul Schiemann, former leader of the German minority in Latvia. Bitterly opposed to National Socialist doctrine, he had the courage to point out the falsity of the German repatriation propaganda and to declare his loyalty to the country of his residence.⁵⁹

Although the governments of the two Baltic countries had not taken the initiative in the evacuations or applied any pressure on the Germans either to go or to stay, they regarded the evacuation as the complete liquidation of the German national groups as such. The Latvian-German treaty was explicit on this score, whereas the Estonian-German protocol made no definite statement. But the practice of both governments left no doubt of their intentions: the Germans who remained were to be completely assimilated. The Reich had apparently given its assent, expressly or tacitly, to this denationalization policy, thus underlining its total lack of interest in the 'bad Germans.'

In Estonia, all German schools were closed and the 150 German children remaining in the country were compelled to attend Estonian schools.⁶⁰ The Tartu *Deutsche Zeitung* ceased publication on 1 November 1939. The Tallinn German newspaper, *Revalsche Zeitung*, in existence since 1860, was scheduled to close on that date, but continued publication until 29 February 1940.⁶¹ The Board of German Cultural Autonomy wound up its affairs on 1 January 1940.

Liquidation of German cultural units in Latvia was effected quite as radically. Five days after the end of the evacuation, the Minister of the Interior firmly declared that

⁵⁹ Reported from *Svenska Dagbladet* in *Der Bund*, 16 November 1939.

⁶⁰ *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 November 1939.

⁶¹ *Baltic Times*, 2 November 1939; *Nation und Staat*, February 1941, p. 155.

since December 15, there are no more Germans in our country, except those who stay as foreigners. All others, who formerly considered themselves Germans but who did not depart, can no longer call themselves Germans. If they are unwilling to consider themselves as Letts or as belonging to some other nationality, they will remain here as persons of undetermined nationality and will gradually disappear. As such [persons of undetermined nationality] they have no right to their own schools, or their own communal institutions, or their own temples. No question may be raised on that score. *Germanism in Latvia is dead forever.*⁶²

All German institutions and organizations were dissolved in the shortest possible time.⁶³ German schools in Riga and the provinces were closed. The last divine service in the German language was held on 10 December,⁶⁴ and three days later *Rigasche Rundschau* ended 72 years of publication. And in February 1940, the Latvian government put the finishing touches to this obliteration of the German imprint by launching a campaign for the Lettonization of German-sounding names.⁶⁵

v

Following the incorporation of Estonia and Latvia into the Soviet Union in 1940, the Reich faced the problem of repatriating the remaining Germans. Official negotiations toward this end began on 23 September,⁶⁶ ending in agreement only on 10 January 1941. As in the case of other Soviet-German transfer treaties, no publicity was given to the progress of the negotiations by either the Reich or the Soviet Union, nor was the treaty text ever published. The two parties were equally reticent on the subject of the actual evacuation. Such silence on the part of the Soviet

⁶² *Valdības Vestnesis*, 21 December 1939.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 29 November and 21 December 1939.

⁶⁴ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

⁶⁵ Arnold Weingärtner, 'Das nationalitätenpolitische Jahr 1940,' in *Nation und Staat*, February 1941, p. 153.

⁶⁶ *Zeitschrift für Politik*, October 1940, pp. 505-6.

Union was in line with its usual policy, but that the Reich saw fit to stem the usual spate of books and articles remains incomprehensible.

According to a communique published simultaneously by the Soviet and German press, the agreement stated that German citizens of the Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics who wished to resettle in the Reich were given the opportunity to do so within two and one-half months after the conclusion of the agreement in the manner provided therein. What that manner may have been is not defined, but it may be assumed that the usual procedure of option was accepted as a basis for the transfer procedure. Presumably option was granted to all those who could prove the existence of some ties with and interests in the Reich. Thus various anti-Soviet elements were given the chance to leave the Baltic countries within the framework of the German evacuation. If the precedents established by earlier Soviet-German transfers were followed, the evacuees were allowed to take with them their household goods and professional tools.

In the course of the evacuation period, which ended on 25 March 1941, 16,244 Germans were transferred from Estonia and Latvia.⁶⁷ 'Cleansing' of the Baltic countries of the last remnants of Germans appears to have been virtually complete. All those who hesitated before now elected resettlement. But since there is no information regarding the degree of pressure exerted upon possible recalcitrants by either the Soviet Union or the co-operating German resettlement authorities, it is difficult to determine exactly how free the option was.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet government had reason to desire a total evacuation of all Baltic Germans: the absence of Germans in these areas would eliminate a possible source of friction in the event of prolonged Soviet-German collaboration; in case of a Soviet-German clash, the Soviet Union would be far

⁶⁷ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 April 1942.

more secure without a strong German fifth column. As for the Reich, it considered the thousands of 'bad Germans' an open challenge to its repatriation policy and a dangerous example of disobedience to the Führer. German officials now saw an opportunity to eradicate a core of passive resistance and to proclaim to the world not only the infallibility of the Führer's wisdom but also the repentance of those who had ever doubted it. The full coincidence of the Soviet and German objectives undoubtedly exercised strong influence on the mass of optants even if no direct pressure was applied by either side.

Three months after the conclusion of the transfer, Germany and the Soviet Union were at war with each other. On 21 October the Führer's headquarters reported the entire Baltic space freed from the enemy, and once more the problem of Reich policy with regard to the Baltic states came to the fore.

There can be little doubt that the Reich intended to keep these countries under its control and to treat them as a kind of protectorate. This gave rise to rumors that the Reich planned to direct the German evacuees from the Baltic back to the countries of their origin. Among the Baltic resettlers in the Warthegau and in Danzig-West Prussia, there arose a movement in favor of return to the 'old homeland,' which, thanks to the successes of German arms, had once more become a 'German land.' This trend, however, met with firm resistance from the higher Reich authorities in the incorporated provinces and all discussion of the topic was ordered halted.⁶⁸ On 9 August 1941 the *New York Times* reported a flat statement by a Nazi leader that return of the evacuees was impossible.

The DUT report for 1941 stated the policy of the Reich more cautiously: 'Unlike that in Lithuania, resettlement in Estonia and Latvia will be authorized only in individual cases, as an exception, and under certain conditions. To this end, a DUT

⁶⁸ *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 25 July 1941.

office will be established in Riga early in 1942.' Whatever may have been the cause—the Reich's lack of desire to recolonize the Baltic countries, with the exception of Lithuania, or its unwillingness to complicate relations with the native Estonian and Latvian populations through the return of the Germans, or the conviction that the colonization of the Warthegau was the task of more immediate importance—the fact remains that all tendencies toward a mass return were sternly suppressed.

VI

Economic Aspects of the Estonian and Latvian Transfers

I

IN the wider picture of the Germans' evacuation from the Baltic states, the subject of property transfer loomed large. In Estonia it created an economic problem of national importance, for although the Estonian Germans constituted only 1.5 per cent of the total population, their economic weight far outbalanced their numerical strength. According to the *New International Yearbook* for 1939, the 'Estonian Balts owned estimated cash and deposits of \$1,250,000 and capital investments estimated at \$200,000,000.'¹ A *Frankfurter Zeitung* dispatch of 29 October 1939 appraised the total value of the property of the German minority in Estonia at 800 million marks (362 million dollars), while a Havas dispatch from Tallinn on 22 November reported that Reich agents had put the figure at 10 billion French francs (230 million dollars).² Such evaluations were of course greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless the transfer to the Reich of any considerable amount of capital from so small a country as Estonia would inevitably deal a heavy blow to the national economy.

In order to avoid a slump in the value of the Estonian kroon, far-reaching restrictions were applied in connection with the evacuation of the Germans. By the terms of the German-Estonian protocol, each evacuee was permitted to take out of the country not more than 50 kroons in Estonian currency

¹ *New International Yearbook*, 1939, p. 232.

² *Posledniya Novosti*, 23 November 1939.

(Article 2:2). (The official exchange rate was \$45.37 for 100 kroons.) The remaining cash and deposits were to be credited to the account of the German Embassy in the Eesti Bank and later transferred to the *Deutsche Treuhandverwaltung* (DT) (German Board of Trustees), which the government of the Reich was authorized to create at the German Consulate in Tallinn to serve as an office of liquidation. Stocks and mortgages were to be similarly handled. Only non-negotiable documents, such as certified excerpts from the land register, could be taken out (Article 2:3). All operations involving the disposal of investments, or liquidation of the accounts or stocks in trust had to be authorized by the Estonian Ministry of Economy (Article 2:4). Personal jewelry and household objects made of precious metals could be taken along by evacuees over fourteen years of age provided that the value of such objects did not exceed 500 kroons per person. Other household objects made of silver and possessing some sentimental or heirloom value could be taken out, or forwarded to Germany later by special authorization of the Ministry of Economy (Article 2:5).

All household furniture could be taken out or forwarded within a three-month period free of duty; property not removed within this period was to be deposited with the customs authorities for later dispatch. The three-month period of grace was also granted for applications to the Ministry of Culture regarding the removal of objects of artistic or cultural-historical value, historical archives and the like (Article 2:1). Evacuees were authorized to take out tools and a certain quantity of the raw materials necessary for the practice of their trade. The Estonian Ministry of Economy could also authorize the export of medical instruments, equipment, and installations (Article 2:6), as well as of automobiles and motorcycles. If the Ministry withheld such authorization, the article in question could be purchased by the Estonian government at a fair price (Article 2:1). The protocol further stated that the Estonian government would 'endeavor to

settle the questions of broken contracts of employment, lease and rent by just compensation for the real damage caused, whenever such questions arise in connection with the resettlement' (Article 2:7). Each evacuee was required to file a signed statement listing the property that was to be forwarded; this statement was to be sent to Berlin within two weeks after the owner's departure from Estonia, and any property not listed therein could not be transferred.

The DT was to be entrusted with the preservation and supervision of all property left behind by the evacuees for future transfer or liquidation, as well as with the settlement of debts or other obligations of the evacuees (Article 3:1). Debts and obligations to persons and institutions within Estonian jurisdiction had priority over all other claims. While the DT was not to enjoy the status of an extraterritorial body and while its activity was to be subordinated to the usual Estonian legislation on procedure, the Estonian government was to grant the organization the legal status necessary for its functioning in accordance with Estonian law (Article 3:2). The Estonian government was entitled to a representative in the DT who would have access to all proceedings of this body and a special German-Estonian Conciliatory Commission was to be created with power to decide all controversial questions which might arise between the German trustees and the Estonian delegate.

The Estonian Ministry of Agriculture agreed to manage, until their liquidation, the large agricultural holdings (farms and estates) that had not already been transferred to Estonian bodies. Expenses in connection with their management, losses, and current income were to be charged to the account of the property concerned. Smaller farms and other agricultural establishments, which had not been disposed of by their owners prior to their departure, were entrusted to persons chosen by their proprietors. It was agreed by the two contracting parties that the DT would

proceed with the liquidation of the German land holdings in co-operation with the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture (Article 3:4).

In actual operation this liquidation encountered considerable difficulty. According to a statement made in the Estonian Parliament on 11 January 1940 by the Minister of Economy, Leo Sepp, '... with regard to country estates and landed property, as a whole, no agreement was reached as to price; in all probability, these estates will have to be liquidated privately in the open market.' The Estonian government was understandably desirous of acquiring the lands left by the evacuees at the lowest possible price. Since it knew that there were no buyers at higher prices in the open market, it was in no hurry to make definite proposals. The DT, on the contrary, was eager to speed the liquidation, for at least one very good reason. Most of the German farms had been mortgaged, and before March 1940 the DT was obliged to pay 500,000 kroons (\$226,850) to the government land bank in settlement of mortgages on 187 farms in order to save them from compulsory auction.³

Under the pressure of such conditions, the Germans became more conciliatory, and on 16 March concluded an agreement with the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture whereby the Estonian government acquired 150 farms comprising 12,600 hectares (31,135 acres) at an average price of 200 kroons (\$91) per hectare for cultivated, and 30 kroons (\$14) for uncultivated land. From 20 to 30 of the largest estates were earmarked for state exploitation; the remainder were destined for lease or sale to Estonian farmers. At a conference of Estonian peasants in Tallinn on 17 March 1940, the Minister of Agriculture, Arthur Tupits, proudly stated: 'Today sees the completion of the Estonian agrarian reform.'⁴ By the middle of the year, approximately

³ *Baltic Times*, 18 January 1940.

⁴ *Ibid.* 14 and 21 March 1940.

2,500 Estonian peasants and farmers had applied for land left by the Germans, the demand far exceeding the supply.⁵

In line with its somewhat indefinite character the protocol stated (Article 4):

The final settlement of the transfer to Germany of the value of the properties which are at present in Estonia will be dealt with in a later agreement, especially the question of the liquidation of stocks and cash which will be deposited and paid into the accounts of the German Embassy or into that of the *Deutsche Treuhandverwaltung*. The transfer of these will be settled in such a manner that the balance of payment and the Estonian economy will remain undisturbed.

In order to reach such an agreement, a mixed German-Estonian commission met at Tallinn on 7 November 1939. On 27 November, negotiations were broken off and the German delegates left for Berlin,⁶ following a categorical declaration by the Estonians to the effect that not only was Estonia unable to pay in cash the value of the property left by the German evacuees, but also that no full payment in kind, in goods, or food could be made within a short time. The Estonians made it clear that if they delivered to Germany their principal exports without receiving foreign exchange, their credit balance would be destroyed and they would be prevented thereby from acquiring from abroad the raw materials and machines needed for their own industry.⁷

On 16 December, Minister Sepp received an invitation to come to Berlin and reopen negotiations. He informed the press, on his return to Tallinn, that with regard to the transfer of capital and the property of the German evacuees an agreement had been reached whereby capital collected by the DT was to be 'returned to the Estonian economic circuit' in order 'to increase the production potentialities of the country and thus facilitate the trans-

⁵ *Nation und Staat*, June 1940, p. 308.

⁶ Jean Cathala, 'Que cherche l'Allemagne en Baltique?' in *Le Temps*, 22 January 1940.

⁷ Tenax, 'Baltic Exodus,' in *Baltic Times*, 15 November 1939.

fer.’⁸ Germany’s Minister of Economy, Dr. Walter Funk, assured Estonia that the Reich ‘would do all in its power’ to supply Estonia with the materials essential to her industry, unless the Reich should experience a shortage in these same materials.⁹ Generally speaking, ‘the German authorities stated that they would respect and keep in mind Estonian interests and that the transfer of property would be carried out at a slow pace.’¹⁰

Since this accord obviated the need for immediate payments either in cash or in kind, it would appear that the outcome of the Berlin conference was something of a victory for the Estonians. Closer study of the implications of the German stand, however, reveals a tendency which might have had grave consequences for the smaller country. The very considerable sums collected by the DT, which were to be ‘returned to the Estonian economic circuit,’ would thus become a Reich investment in the Estonian national economy, making the German state, as such, a powerful partner in Estonian production. Thus German economic domination, so dreaded by the Estonians, would be preserved in its most threatening form, with the place of the Estonian citizens of German ethnic nationality taken by the Reich itself.

In accordance with the stipulations of the protocol, the Estonian Parliament on 11 January 1940 granted legal status to the DT, enabling it to sue and be sued before the courts in all matters pertaining to the financial interests of the German resettlers, and otherwise function as a legal entity. The president and deputy-president of the DT were to be appointed by the German Ambassador in Tallinn, and were to enjoy the rights and privileges of German consuls. Accounts and internal correspondence were to be conducted in German; all communications with the Estonian government and legal bodies were to be conducted in the Estonian language.

⁸ *Baltic Times*, 13 November 1939. ¹⁰ *Baltic Times*, 4 January 1940.

⁹ Cathala, op. cit.

By the middle of March 1940 the DT had established ten branches with 133 employees in various Estonian towns. According to a statement made by its chairman, Dr. Wollert, the board 'had no desire to become a permanent institution in Estonia, but was anxious to carry out its task of settling the claims and liabilities of the Baltic German emigrants and of liquidating their property as soon as possible; it would then discontinue its activities.'¹¹ Minister Sepp estimated that it would take the DT from two to four years to complete its work.¹²

Obviously, all these plans on the part of the Reich made sense only if they were based on the expectation of Estonia's continued existence as an independent state, politically and economically. It is difficult to believe, however, that the political leaders of the Reich could have had any illusions on that score. The general consensus of all politically minded circles of Europe and America was that a rapid sovietization of the Baltic states was imminent. Hitler and his advisers were undoubtedly as keenly aware of this as anyone. They could hardly have thought it possible under these conditions to conclude serious agreements with Estonia that were calculated to extend over a number of years. Thus the impression grows that they regarded all these agreements as a kind of gamble—that from the beginning they had considered the property of the German evacuees as good as lost and had written it off, figuring that whatever might be salvaged would be a welcome windfall.

But the gamble was short-lived. On 17 June the Soviet Union presented Estonia with an ultimatum demanding the formation of a pro-Soviet government. Six weeks later Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union as the sixteenth Soviet Republic, and the German-Estonian protocol of 15 October 1939 and all related agreements were thus rendered inoperative. With the Soviet Union as a partner of the Third Reich instead of Estonia,

¹¹ Ibid. 18 January 1940.

¹² Ibid. 14 March 1940.

the solution of the economic problems involved in the evacuation required a rather different approach.

II

In the resettlement of approximately 48,000 Germans from Latvia to the Reich, the financial and economic issues were particularly complex. Thus the more extensive part of the Latvian-German treaty dealt with questions relating to the transfer of the German evacuees' property, which involved, according to one estimate, 12 billion to 15 billion francs.¹³

According to the preamble, the two contracting parties undertook 'to insure an amicable liquidation of the property of the resettlers which would be left in Latvia, and at the same time to avoid so far as possible any damage to the Latvian national and state economy.' By provision of the treaty (Article 6), the Latvian government promised to entrust a special government agency with 'the settlement of all material and legal questions arising out of the resettlement,' and the government of the Reich undertook to create in Latvia an *Umsiedlungs-Treuhand-aktiengesellschaft* (UTAG) (Resettlement Trust Company) with the same objective.

The property of the German minority in Latvia was considered to consist of the following categories: money in cash and in banks; stocks and shares; precious metals and jewels; movable property; agricultural property; urban real estate; industrial and commercial enterprises. The basic treaty and the additional protocol contained detailed rulings for the handling of each of these seven major groups; the Latvian government later issued a number of supplementary orders, establishing procedures for the disposal of the property left by the evacuees. Any conflict in connection with these rulings was deemed a matter for settlement by the German and Latvian governments.

¹³ Hanc, *Tornado Across Europe*, p. 231.

Since most of the repatriates were fairly prosperous and almost certainly had in their possession considerable amounts of money, the Latvian government flatly refused authorization for the Germans to take their cash holdings out of the country. The sudden removal of such sums would have led to depreciation of the Latvian currency. Resettlers were therefore permitted to take with them only 50 lats (about \$10) per person, and no foreign currency or holdings whatever. All bank deposits were to be paid into a special account in the Latvijas Banka and payments out of this account were authorized only inside Latvia and for transactions connected with the resettlement. The same restrictions applied to sums acquired by the resettlers from liquidation of their property, in so far as these sums were not used for the purchase of clothing and other articles which the basic treaty (Article 8) permitted the evacuees to take with them.

The treaty was hardly more generous with regard to other easily disposed of holdings. All stocks, with the exception of those issued by German enterprises, had to be transferred to the UTAG account in the Latvijas Banka. The removal of gold, silver, platinum, and other precious metals was prohibited. Objects and ornaments made of these metals and precious stones could be taken out of the country only if they had belonged to the evacuee prior to Hitler's 6 October speech on the impending evacuation of German minorities. To avoid the mass conversion of available funds into precious metals and stones, the Latvian government closed all jewelry stores for the duration of the German evacuation.

Resettlers were authorized by the basic treaty (Article 7) to take with them all their movable property or to dispose of it before their departure. The protocol, however, listed many articles whose exportation was definitely prohibited or required special permits from various government ministries. For example, with the exception of used motorcycles, all mechanical vehicles were barred from exportation. To take out an automobile re-

quired a permit from the Ministry of Finance. All agricultural, industrial, and artisan equipment, with the exception of hand tools, had to be left in the country. Pedigreed stallions and cows could not be exported except by special authorization of the Ministry of Agriculture. Hospital, medical, and related equipment could not be removed.

In the cultural domain, historical and archaeological objects discovered in Latvia, archives of Latvian interest, bibliographic rarities, historical monuments, and objects of artistic value were to remain in Latvia. But family records, portraits, paintings, German church books, and the records and gear of the German student corps and societies could be removed at will.

In accordance with the procedure for the liquidation of German agricultural property as outlined in the basic treaty (Articles 8, 10, 11), the Latvian government assumed protection of the property from the moment of the owners' departure, and UTAG was entrusted with the management of the lands until their final disposal. Before 31 January 1940, Latvian government bodies working with UTAG were to take inventory and appraise the property. Latvian authorities were to deliver to UTAG *Schuldverschreibungen* (certificates of indebtedness), dated 31 January 1940, for the total amount, and UTAG was then to turn over the estates to the Latvian authorities or to a body designated by them.

On 7 December 1939, the Latvian cabinet approved the law on acquisition of the agricultural property owned by the repatriated Germans. This law stipulated that such property would be acquired by the state and held by the Latvian Zemes Banka. The sale of property by public auction depended on the bank's authorization. The bank was responsible for obligations connected with the estates within the limits of the value of each property as established by agreement with UTAG.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Valdības Vestnesis*, 8 December 1939.

German agricultural estates registered with the Latvian Zemes Banka numbered 1,764, and amounted to 134,400 acres, out of which the bank planned to create approximately 3,000 Lettish agricultural farms. By 8 December 1939, 20,000 Latvians had expressed a desire to settle on these farms; the number rose to 30,000 by the following March. At this time, 760 Latvian peasant families had been granted 52,756 acres of land. The distribution continued for three more months, and in June the bank announced that the liquidation of the German land holdings in Latvia had been completed. On that occasion, the Latvian government did not neglect to emphasize that a historical injustice had been rectified.¹⁵

As in the case of the agricultural property, the Latvian government, by provisions of the treaty (Articles 8 and 9), assumed protection of the urban real estate owned by the evacuated Germans, and UTAG was entrusted with its management following the owners' departure. UTAG was also assigned the task of compiling a list of such property. The actual disposal, however, followed an entirely different procedure. While all the agricultural estates were turned over to the Latvian government, UTAG, acting on behalf of the German owners, was free to sell the urban property at any time before 31 December 1941. During this period, UTAG had the 'exclusive right of management' of these properties, which probably meant the right to collect all rents and the obligation to pay all expenses. With regard to the liquidation of property not sold or otherwise disposed of before 31 December 1939, the Latvian and German governments agreed to conclude a special accord between June and 31 December 1941.

The compilation of special lists of the industrial and commercial enterprises owned by German repatriates was required by the basic treaty (Article 12). The two governments agreed that

¹⁵ Arnold Weingärtner, 'Das nationalitätenpolitische Jahr 1940,' in *Nation und Staat*, February 1941, pp. 153, 155.

those enterprises which had special importance for Latvian-German economic relations were to be classified apart and that separate provisions would be made to deal with them. As to the fate of all other enterprises, the Latvian government was to be sole judge: if the government deemed it necessary to liquidate an enterprise, either the former owner or UTAG was to be entrusted with its settlement in accordance with the usual Latvian legislation. The treaty set no specific time limit for the winding up of industrial or commercial enterprises, as was the case with the agricultural and urban property liquidation.

Prior to 8 December 1939, 2,500 industrial, commercial, and artisan enterprises had been listed, including 700 big ventures.¹⁶ Of these, about 130 had been earmarked for special consideration.¹⁷ But on 8 December Latvia and Germany signed a protocol according to which only 46 enterprises out of the 130 were classified as important for German-Latvian economic relations and therefore not destined for liquidation. Special permission extending the liquidation deadline to 1 April 1940 was granted to 16 other German enterprises.¹⁸

By provision of the treaty, UTAG was charged with the responsibility for all property rights and obligations of those Germans who left Latvia. The organization was to prepare before 31 May 1940 a list of all claims and other contractual rights of the evacuees that had not been settled before their departure. Claims not presented in due time were to be deemed invalid (Article 16). Conversely, all the property managed by UTAG was to be considered collective security for all unsatisfied claims against individual evacuees that might be presented by the Latvian state or local authorities, or by other legal and physical entities, except in cases of insolvency. All claims were to be settled or bonded within ten years (Article 15).

¹⁶ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

¹⁷ *Valdības Vestnesis*, 23 November and 12 December 1939.

¹⁸ *Rigasche Rundschau*, 9 December 1939.

All amounts in cash or deposits collected under the treaty were to be paid into the account opened for UTAG in the Latvijas Banka. Amounts in excess of the sum necessary to UTAG for its functioning were to be converted into non-interest-bearing certificates of indebtedness issued by the Latvijas Banka and labeled in lats and reichsmarks at the fixed exchange rate of 100 lats for 48.80 reichsmarks; this rate could be adjusted, however, in the event of any modification of the general exchange rate between the two countries' currencies (Article 17).

A principle of the greatest importance in the treaty (Article 18) stipulated that 'the transfer of the amounts collected on the special account in the Latvijas Banka will, as a rule, be effected through increased Latvian exports to Germany. The German government declares that it agrees in principle to consider other transfer possibilities proposed by the Latvian government and also to submit such proposals. The present transfer agreement is valid until a final settlement of transfer questions is reached.'

If one can judge from the statements which found their way into the foreign press, this matter of increased exports of Latvian commodities was the main cause of the protracted German-Latvian negotiations. In a special cable to the *New York Times*, dated 25 October 1939, Tolischus formulated the point of view of the Baltic countries in the following manner: 'None of these countries, though perfectly willing to release those who want to go, is either willing or able to transfer even the remaining amounts except in the course of many years. For the transfer can be accomplished only by exports, and these countries are unable to export except for return value without wrecking their whole economy. In that respect—as in many others—they are citing German precedents to justify their own procedure.' He also observed that the Estonian-German agreement 'is considered too liberal by Latvia . . . where German property is largest. . .' Latvia 'is holding for better terms, which further reduce the chance of immediate transfer and free export to Germany.'

Three days later the Riga correspondent of *Posledniya Novosti* reported: 'The German Embassy in Riga proposed that Latvia pay [for the property of the German repatriates] with butter, meat, flax and timber. These, however, are the principal articles of Latvian export and by giving them away in payment for German property Latvia will be prevented from acquiring abroad the articles she needs.'

The Latvian government newspaper put the case bluntly by stating that 'if the demands of the Reich were accepted, Latvia would have to export to Germany during the next 20 to 25 years a large part of her production in order to pay for the property left behind by the Germans and would find it hard to secure the foreign exchange for purchases elsewhere.'¹⁹

In 1939, 33.5 per cent of the entire Latvian export was already going to Germany; its value ranged from 40 million to 76 million lats (7.6 million dollars to 14.44 million dollars) during the five years immediately preceding World War II. Any considerable increase would therefore 'mean economic bondage to the Reich for 20 years or more.'²⁰

But despite the understandable opposition of the Latvian representatives, the treaty contained the pledge that increased exports would be the means of payment of Germany. It would be erroneous to view this result as victory for the Germans. It was rather the inevitable outcome of the Latvians' categorical statement that cash payments were out of the question, and the absence of any proposal for another means of payment. Latvia could not possibly have obtained more of a concession than that, at the time. The government probably never intended to pay in any form the full value of the property of the evacuated Ger-

¹⁹ M. B., 'Transfers of Populations in North-Eastern Europe,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 18 November 1939, p. 7.

²⁰ Elmyln Williams, 'Modern Exodus,' in *Christian Science World*, 28 October 1939. See also, Nicolas Politis, 'Le Transfert de Populations,' in *Politique Étrangère*, April 1940, p. 89.

mans, but its representatives neither could nor would state that openly. Concurrence in an elastic arrangement which allowed for endless delay and varied interpretations was undoubtedly the most practical move.

After the Germans' departure, Latvia took full advantage of the principle that possession is nine points of the law, apparently deriving immunity from the Reich by virtue of the Latvian-Soviet treaty. Latvian government circles proceeded to launch trial balloons with regard to the appraisal of the property and the compensation procedure. In the middle of January 1940, A. Behrsins declared in a speech at Dvinsk (Daugavpils) that although the amount which was to be paid had not yet been fixed, it would surely exceed 100 million lats (\$19,305,000).²¹ A far cry from the 500 million dollars mentioned as the value of the property by *The World Over*: 1939.²²

UTAG was formed on 19 December with a capital of 300,000 lats (\$58,000) divided in 300 shares. Only German citizens of the Reich could be shareholders, directors, trustees, representatives, or members of the governing bodies or supervising commission. Accounts and internal correspondence were to be conducted in German, but the Latvian Ministry of Trade and Industry was granted the right to supervise all activities. Helmut Dülfer, a representative of the Berlin DUT was appointed director.²³

It appears that UTAG had no time to develop any important activity; friction between it and the Latvian government occurred promptly. In February 1940, UTAG issued an appeal for registration by 25 May of all property belonging to the emigrated Germans, as well as of their assets and liabilities. Latvian government circles declared that such an appeal ran counter to Latvian law, that it had not been envisioned by the treaty of 30 October, that it was issued without the consent of the Latvian

²¹ *La Petite Gironde*, 18 January 1940.

²² *The World Over*: 1939, p. 815.

²³ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20 December 1939.

government, and that it was in no way binding on Latvian citizens.²⁴ UTAG was also accused of failure to discharge obligations left by the German evacuees. According to A. Stegmanis, head of the Latvian administration for liquidating the Germans' property, 'the total amount of unpaid debts left behind is a very large sum and the number of unpaid promissory notes is in the thousands; a great many persons are interested in the satisfactory solution of this question.' The Latvian Ministry of Justice and the Reich Ambassador in Riga exchanged angry notes on this subject.²⁵

It is impossible to know how Germany and Latvia would have coped with these apparently irreconcilable issues eventually. External political events resolved the entire problem, though in an abortive way. On 13 June, Soviet troops entered Riga, and six weeks later Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The Reich had now a new and more difficult contrahent with whom it had to reach an agreement on all questions connected with the liquidation of property left by the German evacuees and with the transfer of the sums realized through this liquidation.

Germany published no data on the compensation actually received prior to the incorporation of Latvia and Estonia into the Soviet Union for the property left by the German evacuees. An indirect indication of the sum may be found in a report on the activity of the DUT for the period ending 31 December 1940,²⁶ which mentioned that the society 'received 42.5 million reichsmarks (17 million dollars) from the transfer and other sources.' What these 'other sources' were and what proportion of the total amount was derived from them is not stated. It is likely, however, that the transfer remittances were chiefly of Baltic origin because during the period covered by the report, the

²⁴ *Baltic Times*, 11 February 1940.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 9 May 1940.

²⁶ *Neues Bauerntum*, April 1941, p. 172.

Reich had conducted transfers from only the following areas in addition to the Baltic countries—the eastern regions of Poland, Soviet-annexed Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Romanian Southern Bukovina, and the Italian South Tyrol. It appears from the report, however, that DUT was represented only in Tallinn, Riga, Bucharest, and Bolzano. Since it had no branches in the Soviet Union, the operations connected with the liquidation of the property of the eastern Poland, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina groups of resettlers remained outside its scope. The number of repatriates from the South Tyrol and the concomitant property transfers did not reach sizable proportions before the fall of 1940. It is possible, therefore, to conclude with reasonable certainty that the receipts from property transfers in the two Baltic states did not exceed 40 million reichsmarks (16 million dollars), whatever the sums received from 'other sources' might have been.

III

Commenting on the evacuation in its initial stages, the Latvian and Estonian press and governments claimed that economic life would not thereby be affected. 'Their [the Germans'] sudden departure will not cause serious difficulties in Estonian economic life,' *Uus Eesti* wrote on 10 October 1939. And one week later, *Rahvaleht* stated: 'Not a single company will be liquidated as a result of the emigration.'

The Latvian press was even more optimistic. On 2 November, three days after the conclusion of the Latvian-German treaty, *Brīva Zeme* openly expressed its satisfaction over the impending departure of the nearly 50,000 Germans of Riga: 'Their departure must be welcomed for it will provide elbowroom for the rest of the population.' The official *Rīts* added another note to the general complacency six weeks later in announcing the forthcoming Lettonization of the German enterprises. 'Lettonization,' the newspaper stated, 'will be felt particularly in large-scale com-

merce. Of the total turnover in this field in 1935, Lettish enterprises accounted for only 29 per cent and German organizations for 63 per cent. Most of the businesses will now be transferred to Latvian concerns.' Lettonization would also affect more than 2,000 industrial and artisan enterprises, at least that portion of them which were economically sound; the rest were to be liquidated. The paper foresaw a substantial improvement for the Letts in the salaried occupations and the liberal professions as a result of the Germans' departure.

All these glowing prophecies to the contrary, there is no doubt that the sudden and hasty departure of so economically active and important a group as the Germans did produce very substantial disruptions in the economic structures of the two countries. Indeed, the normal economic life of Latvia showed a drastic change even before the actual evacuation began. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* reported on 12 October that so many German stores in Riga's midtown area were closed that the streets gave the impression of being dead.

'There is no sense in trying to convince ourselves that the evacuation of our Germans is of no consequence for us Estonians,' reported *Rahvaleht* in December 1939. 'These people lived and worked in our country: when suddenly many thousands of people disappear, whether they be Germans or Estonians, there remains a big empty space. This space must somehow be filled by those who remain. We should have no illusions about the difficulty of this task, especially since it must be completed quickly. . . They left behind a considerable part of their riches. Still it must not be thought that we shall become the richer thereby; indeed the contrary is more probable.'²⁷

In a special article with a characteristic title—'Protested Bills—A Sign of Economic Disturbance'—the *Baltic Times* of 14 March 1940 declared that 'an extraordinary increase in protested bills

²⁷ Quoted from *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, December 1939, p. 1039.

occurred in the last quarter of 1939, as a result of the emigration of the German minority from Estonia. Of the total bills protested in 1939, 24,560 or 39 per cent were presented during the October-December period. . . This caused difficulty to banking and the money market,' the paper observed cautiously. The same phenomenon was observable in January 1940 also: 6,288 bills amounting to 1,100,200 kroons were protested, in contrast to 4,313 bills totaling 875,200 kroons protested in January 1939.

This tremendous number of unsatisfied obligations left behind by the German evacuees provoked both indignation and anxiety in Estonian economic circles, which recalled that according to the letter and spirit of the Estonian-German protocol the DT was responsible for paying all the German bills. The DT chairman, Dr. Wollert, stated at a press conference on 13 March 1940 that the board had satisfied claims against the emigrants to the extent of 3.1 million kroons, but a month later the *Uus Eesti* revealed that liquidation of debts was not proceeding so smoothly as reported by the DT circles in Tallinn.²⁸

Indeed, the Estonians gradually realized that the entire national economy had been affected by the removal of the Germans. According to the census of 1937, out of a total of approximately 61,000 workers in Estonia, more than 26,000 were employed in 150 important industrial enterprises. Of these 150 enterprises, Germans owned 27 involving some 10,000 workers, which means an average of about 380 workers per enterprise; the 78 enterprises owned by Estonians employed only 8,500 workers or an average of 109 per enterprise. The ratio of invested capital corresponded: out of 227 million kroons, representing the total assets of all large private industrial undertakings in Estonia, 65 million kroons belonged to businesses held mainly by Germans and 76 million kroons to enterprises chiefly in Estonian hands.²⁹ 'Estonization'

²⁸ *Baltic Times*, 14 March and 18 April 1939.

²⁹ 'The Role of Germans in Estonia's Economy,' in *Baltic Times*, 11 January 1940.

of this powerful economic sector raised a number of highly complicated financial questions, to say nothing of the difficulties of replacing the experienced German personnel by untrained Estonians.

Similar problems arose in Latvia. According to official Latvian sources, in 1936 there were in Latvia 1,829 registered German commercial firms, including 202 important undertakings; their profit in the preceding year had amounted to 98.2 million lats (20 million dollars). Germans also owned more than 2,000 industrial firms and had large holdings in partnership and joint stock companies,³⁰ as well as substantial investments in urban realty.³¹ In Riga alone, after their departure, more than 18,000 apartments they had owned or inhabited stood vacant,³² while over 200 industrial concerns and some 1,100 artisan enterprises awaited liquidation.³³

In the Latvian provinces, too, the evacuation of the Germans created serious economic problems. Eloquent testimony to the departure of 2,250 Germans from Goldingen and its district was provided by the 200 abandoned farms, the 96 deserted townsites, and the many closed workshops and stores.³⁴ In Liepaja (Libau), Germans left 29 important factories, in Mitau (Jelgava) 6. Throughout Latvia, as a result of the evacuation, 355 factories employing 3,500 workers and more than 2,000 enterprises with nearly 6,000 employees were forced out of existence.³⁵

Official Latvian circles soon admitted the gravity of the problem. Two weeks before the evacuation ended, Behrsins acknowledged that 'the departure of the Latvian citizens of German

³⁰ The data above come from a report by the director of the Latvian Statistical Office, published in *Jaunakas Zinas*, 5 and 6 February 1937.

³¹ *Vierteljahresbericht des Statistischen Amtes der Stadt Riga*, no. 15, 1933.

³² *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 October 1939.

³³ *Posledniya Novosti*, 23 October 1939.

³⁴ *Baltenbriefe*, p. 53.

³⁵ 'Lettland nach der Baltenrücksiedlung,' in *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 1940, vol. 1, p. 34.

nationality has been a serious blow to our economy,' for those who departed were 'specialized workers whom we cannot dream of replacing today.'³⁶ Substantial modifications in the economic policy of the Latvian government followed the evacuation. Economic direction from above was considerably increased and state control was extended to a number of fields of activity with a view to their strict co-ordination.³⁷

IV

Following the incorporation of Latvia and Estonia into the Soviet Union, the problem of the transfer of the properties abandoned by those Germans who had departed entered an entirely new phase. The treaties concluded with the governments of Estonia and Latvia were no longer valid. In principle, the Soviet Union was supposed to take over all obligations incurred by the two incorporated Baltic countries. But German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop declared in his speech on the German-Soviet war a year later that 'the economic pacts between Germany and these states, which, according to the Moscow agreement, were not to be affected, were unilaterally cancelled by the Soviet government.'³⁸ Thus all hopes cherished by the Baltic German repatriates that they might obtain at least a part of the value of their abandoned property vanished overnight. UTAG became popularly known as 'Untergang Tausender Arischer Geschlechter' (Doom of Thousands of Aryan Lineage). New agreements with new masters became necessary. The Reich, therefore, offered the Soviet Union a trade agreement that would include agreements with the Baltic states.

The fact that texts of the German-Soviet agreement of 10 January 1941 on the final evacuation of Germans from the Baltic

³⁶ *Valdības Vestnesis*, 5 December 1939.

³⁷ 'Lettland nach der Baltenrück siedlung' (cited above).

³⁸ *New York Times*, 23 June 1941.

states are not available, together with the extreme reticence of both the Reich and the Soviet Union on this matter, make it impossible to determine the volume and character of the accords. Inasmuch as the property claims of the Reich were treated along with the economic aspects of the German evacuation from Lithuania, fuller details will be given in the succeeding chapter on that transfer. It will suffice to state here that the agreement was based on the principle of a lump sum compensation between the states rather than the appraisal of each evacuee's property, as was the practice in earlier accords.

According to a detailed article on the agreement, the total amount of the Reich's claims for all three Baltic states was fixed at 200 million reichsmarks (80 million dollars), while the Soviet counterclaims, including the value of Lithuanian investments in the port of Memel, were fixed at 50 million reichsmarks (20 million dollars). The net balance in favor of the Reich, therefore, was 150 million reichsmarks (60 million dollars).³⁹ The German-Soviet war started five months after the agreement was signed, and it is highly improbable that in the course of this relatively brief period the Soviet deliveries to the Reich could have amounted to any substantial portion of the total sum.

³⁹ Alfred Thoss, 'Umsiedlungen und Optionen im Rahmen der Neuordnung Europas,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, p. 132.

VII

Transfer from Lithuania and Subsequent Return

I

GERMANS made their first appearance in Lithuania in the thirteenth century, but little trace of these early settlers persisted. It was not until the eighteenth century that German emigrants, mainly from Kurland, Livland, eastern Prussia, Salzburg, and Nassau, turned to Lithuania as a new homeland. Their descendants were concentrated, for the most part, in the southern part of the country between Taurage and Kalvarija; only about a quarter of them lived in the northern areas.¹

According to an official Lithuanian survey of 17 September 1923 the Germans in Lithuania (excluding Memel)² numbered 29,231, or less than 1.5 per cent of the total population. German sources have consistently challenged these figures on the grounds that the survey was made under duress and that the results were falsified. For their part, German circles have at various times placed the number of Germans between 40,000 and 50,000.³

In its social structure, the Lithuanian German group differed radically from the German minorities in Estonia and Latvia. Whereas in the latter countries the overwhelming majority of the Germans were the urban and so-called 'unproductive' elements, such as merchants or members of the liberal professions, two-thirds of the Germans in Lithuania lived in villages and were

¹ Heberle, *Die Deutschen in Litauen*, pp. 45-6; 'Deutsches Leben in Litauen,' in *Der Volksdeutsche*, March 1940.

² Heberle, *op. cit.* p. 34.

³ 'Deutsches Leben in Litauen' (cited above); Manfred Hellman, 'Das Deutschtum in Litauen,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, April 1940.

either peasants or craftsmen.⁴ Statistics based on the 1923 survey indicate that of the economically active Germans, 58.7 per cent were engaged in agriculture, 2.5 per cent in transportation and communications, 16.6 per cent in industry, 2.5 per cent in trade and banks, 4.4 per cent in state administration and public service, 15.3 per cent in other professions.⁵ According to the *Preussische Zeitung* of 11 January 1941, 80 per cent of the Lithuanian Germans were peasants; almost all the rest were artisans, and only a negligible number were engaged in the liberal professions.

Because of this distribution, Lithuanian land reforms, carried out between 1920 and 1922, affected the Germans only very slightly and seem to have caused no resentment on their part. The estates to be expropriated were those in excess of 370 acres, and most of these were owned by Poles or Russians.⁶ In the Mariampole and Vilkomir (Ukmerge) districts, the size of German farms ranged from 5 to between 123 and 148 acres.⁷ Some German farmers with small holdings even received additional strips of land. According to *Wirtschaftsdienst*, however, a small group of German landowners in Northern Lithuania, who held about 481,845 acres, retained only 12,355 acres after the passage of the agrarian laws, and received only inconsiderable compensation.⁸

The Lithuanian Germans had, for the most part, preserved their national character. They had their own primary schools, a number of youth and welfare organizations, libraries, and other institutions, and they constituted a normal, sound, and well-to-do folk group. During the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the war, surveys on Lithuania in *Nation und Staat* in-

⁴ 'Die deutsche Volksgruppe in Litauen,' in *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 2 January 1941.

⁵ Heberle, *op. cit.* p. 57.

⁶ Documents distributed among the members of the League of Nations, 149 (1925), 1, pp. 7-8.

⁷ A. Demin, 'Die agrarsoziale Entwicklung in Litauen,' in *Neues Bauern-tum*, January 1940, p. 29.

⁸ *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 24 January 1941.

variably cited the many achievements of the German minority and predicted a brilliant future for its further development. Even after the treaty of 10 October 1939, which brought Lithuania into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, the General Secretary of the German *Kulturverband* in Lithuania stated that 'the German folk group can proudly look back upon a successful year's work.'⁹ Membership in the *Kulturverband* had increased by 500 to 800 per cent in the various centers of German concentration, and its funds had increased accordingly.¹⁰

In the fall of 1939, after Hitler had announced his policy with regard to the German minorities in Eastern and Southern Europe, and after the evacuation of the Germans from Estonia and Latvia had begun, the press predicted freely that the Lithuanian Germans would also be recalled to the Reich. On 30 November a short editorial in the *Baltic Times* announced: 'It is reported that at the beginning of December the German minority [in Lithuania] is to be resettled in former Polish territory. Some 35,000 persons are involved.' On 5 December the Lithuanian newspaper *Lietuvos Zinios* wrote: 'We know that the German minorities have already gone from Estonia and Latvia; they are now going from Finland and are preparing to go from Lithuania.' Even the German semi-official bulletin, *Facts in Review*, reported that 'the repatriation of from 80,000 to 120,000 Germans of the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia is well under way.'¹¹

Despite these reports, however, there can be no doubt that in the fall of 1939 the Reich had no intention of evacuating the Lithuanian Germans. The German press did not once refer to the repatriation of Lithuanian Germans during the months from October 1939 to June 1940. Germany, it would appear, had never abandoned the idea of using Lithuania in its plan for expansion.

⁹ *Nation und Staat*, January 1940, p. 133.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* April 1940, p. 237.

¹¹ 'Repatriation: Background for Peace,' in *Facts in Review*, November 1939, p. 3.

Under the terms of the Soviet-German pact of 28 September 1939 the Reich was obliged to yield the greater part of Lithuania to Soviet control, but a certain strip of Lithuanian territory was to remain within the German sphere of influence.¹² Thus, unlike the situation in Estonia and Latvia, the removal of the Germans was not implied in the Soviet-German agreements. And since the 40,000 or so Germans in Lithuania could well serve the Reich's far-reaching plans for that country, the question of their transfer was not raised during the first eight or nine months of Soviet penetration into the Baltic countries.

However, after Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet armies on 15 June 1940, the Reich opened negotiations for the evacuation of the German minority in conjunction with the arrangements made for the final evacuation of the Germans in Estonia and Latvia. Conferences were begun in Kaunas on 23 September and lasted until 10 January 1941, when an agreement was signed.¹³ As in the case of all the preceding German-Soviet pacts of this nature, the text of this treaty was not made public.

II

The preparatory work for the evacuation was done by the delegates of the German *Kulturverband* in Lithuania, but the actual transfer was directed by a Reich *Aussiedlungskommando* (evacuation squad), which crossed the German-Soviet frontier ten days after the conclusion of the negotiations and set up regional headquarters in Kaunas, Mariampole, and Taurage. Three frontier transit points were designated for those who traveled by railroad—Krottingen-Bajohren, Taurage-Langszargen, and Wirballen-Eydtkuhnen. For those who chose transportation by road and cart, five frontier transit points were selected.

Soviet trains brought 34,347 resettlers to the German border,

¹² *New York Times*, 23 June 1941.

¹³ *Mirovoye Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, 1941, p. 128.

the first arriving on 3 February. There the evacuees and their luggage were shifted to German railroads, which have a smaller gauge. The evacuation by road and cart started considerably later, the first trek reaching the frontier on 25 February. A total of 6,773 resettlers, with 3,850 vehicles and 5,890 horses, left Lithuania by trek. Another 6,890 reached the Reich by bus and truck, and 1,349 in a 'pedestrian trek,' which was not too strenuous since there were many German settlements situated along the border. In addition to the human beings, more than 4,000 head of cattle, 7,000 sheep, about 5,600 pigs, and 24 truckloads of poultry were transported.¹⁴

The immediate destination of the resettled Lithuanian *Volksdeutsche* was assembly camps in East Prussia, where 'adequate preparations had been made for the reception of the compatriots across the border.'¹⁵ These camps had been built by the *Technische Nothilfe* (Technical Emergency Service), the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Reich Labor Service), and the police of Bajohren, Heydekrug, Langszargen, Neidenburg, Soldau, and Evenrode. They were well equipped to house the resettlers comfortably, and to provide medical and recreational facilities.¹⁶

Altogether, approximately 50,000 Germans were removed from Lithuania to the Reich under the terms of the agreement of 10 January. The fact that this number exceeds the figures on the German population given by both Lithuanian and German sources has been variously interpreted. The Germans explained it as a result of the awakening of national consciousness among Germans who had become assimilated and had forgotten their *Deutschtum*. A more realistic explanation has been given by Dr. J. Robinson, who left Lithuania late in 1940; he reported that 'it is not only Germans who are going to be transferred, but

¹⁴ Alfred Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 69-70, and 'Umsiedlungen und Optionen im Rahmen der Neuordnung Europas,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, p. 132.

¹⁵ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 71.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 71.

also anti-Soviet-minded Lithuanians, who possess only the slenderest ties with Germans or even none at all.' ¹⁷

This statement has substantial backing. As early as the winter of 1939, *Lietuvos Zinios* reported that 'according to the representatives of the *Kulturverband*, German nationality will not be decided on racial grounds but according to desire.'¹⁸ *Current News on the Lithuanian Situation* of 15 October 1941 stated that 'many Lithuanians, unable to flee Lithuania earlier, seized this final opportunity to save themselves and their families, and to escape the Bolshevik terror.' The very broad definition of 'persons of German nationality' laid down by the Soviet-German treaty of 10 January 1941 permitted the registration for transfer to Germany of all persons able to prove their German descent, relationship, graduation from school in Germany, or possession of property there.

Owen J. C. Norem, who was United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Lithuania from 1937 to 1940, stressed the importance of religious affiliations: 'Since all Germans were members of the Lutheran church, it became general to consider all Lutherans as Germans. This would certainly be erroneous in the extreme since many Lithuanians had become Lutherans. But when the Russians seized the country in 1940, practically all Lutherans were quite content to be counted as Germans since it meant a release from the clutches of the Bolsheviks.' ¹⁹

The previously cited issue of *Current News on the Lithuanian Situation* asserted that not more than half the 50,000 persons who left Lithuania were of German descent. According to a Stockholm cable in the *New York Daily News* of 13 April 1942, Berlin admitted that among the evacuees from Lithuania there were

¹⁷ Robinson, *The Soviet-German Puzzle as Seen from the Baltic*. This unpublished study, prepared for the Institute of Jewish Affairs, was made available to the author by Dr. Robinson.

¹⁸ *Lietuvos Zinios*, 5 December 1939.

¹⁹ Norem, *Timeless Lithuania*, p. 271.

35,000 Lithuanians and only 18,000 Germans, figures that cannot, of course, be taken at their face value. The Berlin correspondent of the Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter*, who had been invited by the German Ministry of Propaganda to visit the town of Eydtkuhnen at the time of the German evacuees' arrival, stated that the majority of the resettlers did not speak German, and that they had been sent to a special camp 'to learn the German language and German ideology.'²⁰ In the light of these various reports, however exaggerated, it may still be safely assumed that the proportion of non-Germans among the evacuees from Lithuania was exceptionally high.

Inasmuch as the evacuation was conducted entirely under the strict censorship of the Soviet regime, it is difficult to ascertain how different elements of the population felt about the transfer. The official Soviet press confined itself to the publication of two communiques—that of 11 January 1941 on the conclusion of the Soviet-German agreement, and that of 26 March 1941 on the termination of the exchange. But a clue to the reaction of nationalist Lithuanian political circles to the evacuation of the German minority may be found in an article in *Lietuvos Zinios* of 5 December 1939, when the question of repatriation was first raised:

Lithuanians have always maintained good relations with their German minority. Lithuanian Germans have often displayed loyalty and patriotism although there have also been misunderstandings and attempts at Germanization—but these have been surmounted. Lithuanians of the Lutheran faith have no reason to leave Lithuania. Their religion does not make them Germans. Neither must Germans, among whom there are many Catholics, leave the country if they themselves feel that they belong to Lithuania and are loyal subjects. No one is forcing them to go. But he who feels himself a German and is only happy in Germany may go. No one is holding him back.

²⁰ *News Bulletin on Eastern European Affairs*, 22 March 1941, no. 70.

III

In the official Soviet-German communique on the 10 January agreement there is no mention whatever of the transfer of property. But, as stated in the preceding chapter, the accord provided for a lump sum compensation of 200 million reichsmarks (80 million dollars) for all the remaining property of the German evacuees in the Baltic states, while the Soviet counterclaims, including the value of the Lithuanian investments in Memel, were estimated at 50 million reichsmarks (20 million dollars), leaving a net balance in favor of the Reich of 150 million reichsmarks (60 million dollars).²¹

The important aspect of this agreement is that it was based on an entirely new principle of accounting for the property left by the evacuees. During earlier transfers, the property of each resettler was appraised separately and the total of these estimates was supposed to be accounted for by trade dealings between the Reich and the other countries concerned. Implementing such agreements had apparently proved unsatisfactory to both partners, owing to the inevitable friction and delays, and the deep dissensions that occurred even in reaching the estimates. In this particular instance, the settlement of accounts would have been far more complicated than on previous occasions, for it involved consideration of the liquidation of claims connected with the Estonian and Latvian evacuations of 1939, as well as with the final transfer from these countries, in addition to the immediate operations concerning Lithuania. The arrangements covered two evacuation periods and three countries, making the scope of the accounts inclusive in time as well as space—a persuasive reason for the two contracting parties to try a new method of settlement.

The Reich undoubtedly hoped to obtain quicker and more

²¹ Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlungen und Optionen . . .' (cited above), p. 132.

certain compensation for the property left by evacuated Germans, but the sequence of events must have thwarted all such hopes. In the brief period between the signing of the agreement and the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the Reich probably received a very small fraction of the sum conceded it by the treaty.

IV

According to the DUT report for 1941, the evacuated Lithuanian Germans were to be resettled mainly in the German-incorporated Polish district of Ciechanów, which had been renamed Regierungsbezirk Zischenau, and included in the Gau of East Prussia.²² The district had an area of 5,000 square miles and a population of 850,000, comprising, even according to German sources, not more than 250,000 *Volksdeutsche* and a steadily increasing number of *Reichsdeutsche*.²³ The Germans transferred from Lithuania were to serve as pioneers of Germanization in this area.

The situation was fundamentally altered in the summer of 1941, when Lithuania became German-occupied territory and was included in the Reich-created province of Ostland. Within this province, Lithuania constituted the Generalkommissariat Litauen, comprising the former Free State of Lithuania and the district of Wilno, as well as several smaller districts of White Russia, and covering an area of 25,769 square miles, with a population of 2,858,100.²⁴

The possible return of the evacuated Germans and anti-Soviet Lithuanians became a question of immediate interest. In October 1941, the Lithuanian Legation in Washington stated that as of that date 'with few exceptions, none of them have been granted

²² *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1939, 1, p. 2042.

²³ Friedrich Wahl, 'Bericht über Zischenau,' in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, July 1941, p. 443.

²⁴ *Deutsche Bergwerks-Zeitung*, 9 April 1943.

permission by German authorities to return to Lithuania.' ²⁵ Lithuanian circles interpreted this as signifying that the Reich had no intention of annexing Lithuania for purposes of German colonization, as it had the incorporated Polish provinces. But the DUT report for 1941 announced that of all the repatriated German folk groups, the Lithuanian Germans were the only ones who would be sent back to the country of their origin. ²⁶ A branch of the DUT was established in Kaunas to organize the resettlement, ²⁷ and some time later official Berlin quarters stated that the return of the Lithuanian Germans was to be a voluntary matter. ²⁸

There arose, however, the problem of the non-German elements among the 50,000 persons who had left Lithuania. The Reich authorities had, of course, been well aware of the fact that a large part of the alleged *Volksdeutsche* were Lithuanians who had allowed themselves to be described as Germans only in order to qualify for evacuation. This group did not suspect that the German evacuation officials had registered them in a specific category: their passports had been stamped with the letter A, standing for *Altreich* and indicating that they were to be sent to Germany proper. The passports of genuine Germans, on the other hand, had been stamped with the letter O for *Osten*, which signified that they were destined for resettlement in the German-incorporated eastern Polish provinces. ²⁹ It was not until the announcement that persons transferred from Lithuania in the spring of 1941 were to be sent back that the holders of A passports discovered that they were not eligible for return. As the German Commissar of Kaunas, Hans Cramer, stated in an article in the

²⁵ *Current News on the Lithuanian Situation*, no. 7, 15 October 1941.

²⁶ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 April 1942.

²⁷ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 3 April 1942.

²⁸ *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 August 1942.

²⁹ *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 December 1942; DNB broadcast from Berlin, 2 February 1943.

Kauener Zeitung of 29 September 1942, 'the repatriation of the Lithuanian Germans is being carried out *with discrimination*.'

The DUT report for 1942 announced that 36,000 Lithuanian Germans were to be sent back to Lithuania and resettled in five districts. Some 3,600 other Lithuanian Germans who had, in the meantime, been permanently installed in the Ciechanów district were not to be returned to Lithuania.³⁰ Only those Germans from Lithuania who had been designated for the East but had not yet been settled there, and those workers who were not trained for their new vocations were allowed to apply for resettlement in Lithuania. By 1 July 1943, some 4,700 families, totaling from 18,000 to 20,000 persons, had actually been resettled,³¹ and by the end of the year 30,000 Germans had returned to Lithuania. Further re-emigration was then abruptly halted.³²

Thus some 33,600 Lithuanian Germans of the 50,471 persons who went back to the Reich are accounted for. German sources are significantly silent with regard to the fate of the remaining 17,000. It is safe to assume that within this group were all the non-Germans who managed to leave Lithuania with the *Volksdeutsche* in 1941. *Dagens Nyheter* of 21 July 1943 quoted a 'private Lithuanian informant, well acquainted with the political and economic conditions in his country,' who reported that these people were still in Germany in the summer of 1943 and that 'no one believes that he will soon be able to return.' According to the same source, a few, however, were permitted to return on condition that they relinquish all their property rights in Lithuania.

³⁰ *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1943, no. 10, p. 344.

³¹ *Current News on the Lithuanian Situation*, November 1943.

³² *Rheinisch-Westphälische Zeitung*, 17 May 1944.

V

The German-controlled Kaunas radio announced on 26 and 27 September 1942 the arrival of the first group of 8,000 Germans, 'who return to the country in order to work for Germany together with the Lithuanians.'³³ Hans Cramer, too, sounded the note of harmony and co-operation, assuring the Lithuanians that the return of the Germans would not affect them adversely.³⁴ But *Dagens Nyheter* reported on 19 December that the reappearance of the Germans 'caused much unrest among the Lithuanians, who feared they would be driven from their farmsteads.'

According to Cramer, the one-time German estates were to be returned to their former proprietors; he pledged, however, that old Lithuanian property would, of course, be respected, and that only non-Lithuanian holders of the former German farmsteads would be removed.³⁵ The term 'non-Lithuanian' referred to Polish and Jewish farmers. All Jewish-owned agricultural property, mainly in the Swieciany district, had been confiscated. SS-Sturmbannführer Dr. Duckart, chief of the resettlement staff in Kaunas, announced that Lithuanians who had been tilling these estates would have to turn them over to the returning *Volksdeutsche*.³⁶ As to Polish-owned real property, the *Robotnik Polski* of 1 August 1942 reported many arrests among Poles in Lithuania, especially in the Wilno district villages, in order to 'make room for the returning Germans.' The larger Polish-owned properties in the Kaunas area had also been expropriated.³⁷

It cannot be ascertained, however, that only Jewish and Polish

³³ *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 April 1943.

³⁴ *Kauener Zeitung*, 29 September 1942.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 29 September 1942.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 22 October 1942.

³⁷ *Survey of Central and Eastern Europe*, February 1943, no. 2, p. 8.

farms were utilized for the settlement of the returning Germans. According to *Dagens Nyheter*, many Lithuanian farmers in the western part of the country, an area chosen for German colonization, were evicted from their properties on the pretext that they were either communist sympathizers or of Polish origin, and were replaced on their farms by Germans.³⁸ The dispossessed Lithuanians were promised by Cramer that they would 'get other agricultural estates with sufficient basis for existence.'³⁹ Dr. Duckart assured them that they would be compensated with land formerly owned by *Volksdeutsche*, in areas not chosen for German recolonization.⁴⁰

Not only German farmers but also persons of special skills, artisans, and merchants were brought back to Lithuania. The majority having come from Kaunas, they were for the most part returned to this city, although not all the Germans who had formerly lived in Kaunas were repatriated.⁴¹ In all, some 800 families numbering about 4,000 persons returned. In order to obtain dwellings for these newcomers, all residents of Kaunas whose presence there was not essential were asked to give up their apartments 'voluntarily.' They were promised that the city housing office would help them find homes in the country. Not enough dwellings were obtained in this manner; therefore Lithuanians occupying homes that had formerly belonged to Germans were advised that they would have 'to deliver them to their legal former German proprietors.' As compensation they were to receive suitable dwellings in other parts of the city.⁴²

The Germans who returned to Lithuania did not regain Lithuanian citizenship. They remained an alien group and were classed as *Reichsdeutsche* by the German occupation authorities. In order to remove any possible doubts on this score, a special

³⁸ *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 December 1942.

³⁹ *Kauener Zeitung*, 29 September 1942.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 22 October 1942.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 29 September 1942.

⁴² *Ibid.* 29 September 1942.

order was issued, which stated that the German resettlers were to be treated as *Reichsdeutsche* and were to receive the Reich German labor book instead of the foreigners' labor book.

There are indications that many of the resettlers either entered Lithuania independently of the resettlement staff responsible for organizing the transfer, or deliberately lost touch with it after their return, for notices appeared repeatedly in the German-language press requiring resettlers to report by 30 September 1943, and threatening those who failed to do so by 1 November with the deprivation of all protection from the settlement, state and party authorities, and with the withholding of food ration cards.⁴³ This anxiety to maintain touch may perhaps be taken as an indication of preparations against the possible need for a sudden withdrawal from the territory.

According to *Baltiska Nyheter* of 31 July 1944, 'not one of the 30,000 *Volksdeutsche* whom Hitler moved to Lithuania was allowed to return to the Fatherland' after the Germans had been forced to retreat from that area. Those among them who attempted to flee from Lithuania were mobilized for the construction of defenses in western sections of the country five to ten kilometers away from the German frontier.

⁴³ Ibid. 28 August 1943; *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 22 September 1943.

VIII

Transfer of the Germans from the Soviet-Incorporated Polish Provinces

I

THE swift conquest of Poland by the German and Soviet armies in September 1939 led to the conclusion on the 28th of that month of a treaty delimiting the two larger nations' spheres of interest in the vanquished country. Considering it 'exclusively their task to restore peace and order in these territories and to assure to the peoples inhabiting them a peaceful existence which will correspond to their national characteristics,'¹ Germany took over the western portion of the country, and the Soviet Union acquired the eastern areas populated mainly by Ukrainians and White Russians. The Soviet Union acted immediately for the incorporation of these newly won regions and on 3 November formally granted them admission as part of the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet Socialist Republics.

According to Hitler's speech in the Reichstag on 6 October, the Reich and the Soviet Union were confronted with the problem of 'a new order of ethnographic conditions, that is to say, resettlement of nationalities,' as a result of the breakdown of the Polish state. The Führer frankly stated that the immediate goal of these prospective shifts was to avert conflicts in this section of Europe where the interests of the two nations lay so dangerously close to each other.

Eleven days later, a Soviet communique announced the arrival in Moscow of a German 'repatriation commission to conduct negotiations for the return to Germany of German citizens and

¹ *Pravda*, 29 September 1939.

persons of German origin residing in the western Ukraine and western White Russia areas who desire to settle in Germany.² Negotiations ended on 3 November in a treaty stipulating that persons of German ethnic nationality residing in the part of Poland incorporated into the Soviet Union, and persons of White Russian or Ukrainian ethnic nationality residing in the part of Poland incorporated into the Reich or forming the German sphere of influence were authorized to choose the regime under which they wished to live. The text of the treaty was never made public by either party, although on 5 November the German press published a detailed communique outlining the general character and content of the agreement. The Soviet press did not publish this communique until 20 November and then only in a very much abridged form.³ On the whole, both governments maintained the utmost reserve with respect to the agreement.

II

The German minorities in the western Ukraine (eastern Galicia and Wolhynia) and in western White Russia (Narew River district) had a long and varied history.⁴ It was their boast that they had originally migrated to Wolhynia as early as the thirteenth century on the express invitation of the Ruthenian princes. Germans had also responded *en masse* to the Polish landlords' appeal for tenants in 1861 when the abolition of serfdom created a manpower shortage.

In 1914, when Wolhynia belonged wholly to Russia, official Russian statistics revealed nearly 200,000 Germans living in 600 exclusively German settlements throughout the province.⁵ In the

² *New York Times*, 19 October 1939.

³ *Ibid.* 21 November 1939.

⁴ Polish Wolhynia, incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1939, was little more than half the original Wolhynian Province which prior to World War I had formed part of the Russian Empire.

⁵ H., 'Heimat in Osten,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, June 1939, pp. 258-9.

following year, however, after the defeat of the Russians in the Carpathians, the Wolhynian Germans were deported to Siberia lest they lend aid to the advancing German troops. Their gradual repatriation to Wolhynia was not begun until after the Soviet-German Brest-Litovsk treaty of 3 March 1918. Finding their homes and villages ravaged by war, some 30,000 had not the heart to start anew, and chose to go on to Germany in the wake of the retreating armies. But the majority set about rebuilding and in the course of the next two decades they succeeded in 'attaining a certain modest degree of well-being.'⁶ In June 1939 an article in *Deutsche Arbeit*, signed by Dr. H., reported economic and cultural progress among the Germans in Wolhynia and a strong national awakening.⁷ The author also stated that they enjoyed a relatively high standard of living, and maintained the highest birth rate among all the national groups in the province, with families of six or seven children not uncommon.⁸

Yet, even at this date, prior to any hint of repatriation to Germany, Dr. H. noted grave concern on the part of the older Germans because there was no land for them to pass on to their sons. 'A father does not look forward without anxiety,' he wrote. 'What will happen to all these numerous children? He has a strange feeling at the thought that he has no land for the sons who are growing up, and that they will have to earn their living as hired help or tenant farmers. This feeling is not just a passing thought. A big inner crisis is developing. Many persons are prepared to abandon the country they love so much. And when they are asked where they will go, the answer is, "Back to Germany."'⁹

In Galicia too the Germans played a varying role over a long span of years. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they

⁶ Georg Runge, 'Zur Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen,' in *Nation und Staat*, January 1940, p. 116.

⁷ H., op. cit. p. 263.

⁸ Ibid. p. 269.

⁹ Ibid. p. 264.

held an economically and culturally important place in the life of the country, but in the course of the next century these first settlers were 'thoroughly Polonized.'¹⁰ A new wave of German colonists swept into the country in 1772, following the first partition of Poland and Galicia's annexation by Austria. Nearly 13,000 Germans had settled in Galicia by 1785 and again they contributed largely to the economic and cultural development of the region.¹¹ But during the second half of the nineteenth century, their situation worsened. When Galicia obtained autonomy in 1867, and virtual hegemony was thus assured for the Polish population, an intensive program of Polonization was inaugurated. Polish became the prevailing language, and the government passed largely into Polish hands. Thus when the German Emperor appealed for settlers for the colonization of the West Prussian and Poznan provinces early in the twentieth century, many Galician Germans responded; others emigrated overseas during this same period.¹²

It is of interest to note that even in 1903 German political literature was concerned with the question whether the German minority in Galicia could exist as such much longer. Karl Harlos gave a negative answer: 'The assertion that the [German] colonists, who have succeeded in living here for 120 years, will be able to go on is as illfounded as the assertion that those who live to be 100 years old can live to be 200. . . Whoever has known the Germans in Galicia not only in their Sunday attire but also in their everyday clothes doubts the possibility of their continued existence there, and agrees that if they are to be rescued, they must be transplanted to more favorable soil.'¹³

According to the Polish census of 9 December 1931, there

¹⁰ Runge, *op. cit.* p. 117.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 117; Kaendl, *Geschichte der Deutschen in den Karpatenländern*, vol. 1, pp. 117-19.

¹² Sommer, *135,000 gewannen das Vaterland*, p. 10.

¹³ Harlos, 'Ist das Deutschtum in Galizien lebensfähig?' in *Deutsche Erde*, 1903, p. 105.

were 36,000 Germans in Galicia, which had become a Polish province after World War I;¹⁴ German sources put the figure between 50,000 and 60,000.¹⁵ There were 54 exclusively German settlements; many others had either a German majority or a sizable German population.¹⁶ German landlords owned more than 100,000 acres of land,¹⁷ while German peasants held 123,000 acres.¹⁸

Despite this apparently secure foothold, the plight of the Germans in Galicia was pictured as worsening with every year. 'Fluctuations in Polish economic life,' wrote Heinz Heckel, 'have their effect on the German settlers. Moreover the young peasants have little opportunity to find any occupation beyond the limits of their own villages. There is no chance for emigration. . . Young people must stay in their villages; they cannot even find temporary employment in the Reich. Patrimony must be divided for new families. Meager little households are thus springing up, and a peasant proletariat, so characteristic of Poland, is developing in German villages.'¹⁹

The Germans in the Narew River district of western White Russia formed the smallest of the German colonies in Poland. There were only about 5,000 in the Białystock area, and several thousands more were scattered over a number of smaller localities near by. Their nearest German neighbors beyond that were the few thousands in the Suwalki-Augustów district and farther to the east. Although culturally they were fairly well Polonized, the Narew Germans had succeeded in remaining 'racially pure.'²⁰

¹⁴ Wolf, *Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa*, p. 63.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 119; Esche, *Polen kreuz und quer*, p. 99; Kauder, ed., *Das Deutschtum in Polen, Teil 2*, p. 28.

¹⁶ *Die Nationalitäten in den Staaten Europas*, p. 117.

¹⁷ 'Das rückgeführte Deutschtum Ostpolens,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, January 1940, p. 23.

¹⁸ Kauder, op. cit. p. 28.

¹⁹ Heckel, 'Die Not des Deutschtums in Galizien,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, June 1939, p. 265.

²⁰ 'Das rückgeführte Deutschtum Ostpolens' (cited above), p. 23.

III

A total of 128,000 Germans were transferred from the Soviet-incorporated portions of Poland on the basis of the 3 November treaty,²¹ and the entire evacuation was completed well before the 1 March 1940 deadline. Given 119 days in which to conduct the operation, the Reich devoted more than a month of the time to organizing the evacuation bodies. The 307 members of the *Umsiedlungskommando* (resettlement squad) crossed the Soviet frontier on 8 December, registration started on the 15th, and five days later the transfer got under way.²² Between 21 December and 31 January, 118,000 persons entered German-held territory; the remaining 10,000 had followed by 9 February although not until the 22nd did DNB make an official announcement that the repatriation had been completed and that forces mobilized for the work were being withdrawn.²³ The pattern discernible in both preceding and subsequent transfers manifested itself in these operations too—the speedy departure of the bulk of the repatriates and the disproportionately prolonged evacuation of the much smaller remaining group.

In a breakdown of the total number of Germans evacuated under the terms of the treaty between December 1939 and February 1940, Dr. Tornau reports that 64,554 came from Wolhynia, 55,400 from Galicia, and 8,053 from the Narew district.²⁴ Dr. W. Gradmann corroborates these figures, and notes that 'the number of these national groups was normally given as somewhat lower.'²⁵ And indeed, the number of evacuees from Wol-

²¹ Tornau, 'Die Alters- und Berufsschichtung der volksdeutschen Rücksiedler,' in *Nation und Staat*, March 1941, pp. 223-4.

²² Sommer, op. cit. p. 59.

²³ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 23 February 1940. According to Sommer, op. cit. p. 8, the repatriation was not completed until 11 March 1940.

²⁴ Tornau, 'Die Alters- und Berufsschichtung . . .' (cited above), pp. 223-4.

²⁵ Gradmann, 'Die umgesiedelten deutschen Volksgruppen,' in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, May 1941, p. 284.

hynia was about 37 per cent higher than the official Polish figure of 46,383 Germans in that area, and even exceeded by approximately 7.5 per cent the German claims to 60,000.²⁶ This same discrepancy is apparent in the case of Galicia. Polish sources reported 36,000 Germans resident there and Germans put the figure at 51,000; the number of evacuees was nearly 54 per cent greater than the first figure and 8.6 per cent higher than the second.²⁷ (No reliable statistics on the exact number of Germans in the Narew district are available.)

Dr. Gradmann concluded that this variance could be attributed to the fact that 'under the tremendous influence of the unification of German blood and in view of the possibility of returning to the Reich, many persons discovered in themselves the *Deutschtum* that they had long forgotten.'²⁸ He admits, however, that 'racially alien elements' participated in the evacuation from both Galicia and Wolhynia. There are no reliable data testifying to the departure of a considerable number of anti-Soviet non-Germans, comparable to the exodus that occurred in the Baltic states. An indirect and belated indication of just such a situation, however, may be found in the decisions of the *Landgerichte* of Inowroclaw and Lodz, which pronounced the nullification of two marriages fictitiously contracted by Germans during the resettlement action in 1939-40 with persons of Russian nationality who 'had no intention of contracting a real marriage but wanted only to leave Russia in this way.'²⁹

In seeking the reason for the German minorities' readiness to join a mass migration from Poland, it is important to recall that the greater part of the Wolhynian and Galician evacuees were peasants. The traditional conception prevailing in the literature on this subject is formulated by C. A. Macartney, who empha-

²⁶ Karl G. von Loesch, 'Der Sieg des Volksgedanken,' in *Volk und Reich*, December 1940, p. 798.

²⁷ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10 December 1939.

²⁸ Gradmann, *op. cit.* p. 284.

²⁹ *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 3 January 1943.

sized that the entire history of the right of option connected with evacuation has shown that 'it is chiefly exercised by town dwellers and by persons whose source of income is not tied to their place of residence. . . The right is seldom exercised by peasants, who almost invariably prefer to remain on their land, even at the price of being placed under an alien and often aggressive regime.'³⁰

German sources, however, are eloquent in regard to the eagerness with which the peasants responded to the repatriation appeal, their calm confidence in the future, and unquestioning acceptance of the restrictions governing their departure.³¹ It appears then that there must have been a stimulus of exceptional force to make the peasantry so willing to heed the call. It is difficult to discern such motive power in the popular but far from adequate slogan used during the evacuations from Estonia and Latvia: 'The Führer calls, we follow him.' The Wolhynian and Galician Germans had neither the national consciousness nor the political turn of mind that would render them susceptible to such overtures. Nor was there any evidence of National Socialist sympathies or organization that would have swayed them.

The truly decisive factor was the Germans' fear of imminent social and economic change—*horror sovieticus*, and the firm belief that their hard-won livelihood would be destroyed by the Soviet regime. Theodor Zoeckler, one of the leaders of the Galician Germans, probably expressed the general attitude of his compatriots when he explained why they decided to abandon the patrimony of generations. 'We knew that even if we had decided to stay, we would have been unable to preserve even the smallest part of the property acquired in part by our fathers and forefathers, and this made our departure easier.'³²

³⁰ Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, p. 431.

³¹ Sommer, op. cit. p. 18; Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser, *Das Buch vom grossen Treck*, p. 18.

³² Theodor Zoeckler, 'Was wir alles zurückliessen?' in *Der Volksdeutsche*, January 1940.

This apprehension was confirmed by Soviet legislation and practice in the course of the first month after the incorporation of Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew district into the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet Socialist Republics. On 28 October, the eve of the request for incorporation into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the People's Assembly of the western Ukraine voted for confiscation of the larger land estates, and of the lands belonging to the so-called *ossadniki* (Polish settlers who had been colonized in ethnographically non-Polish provinces). A similar decision was reached two days later by the People's Assembly of western White Russia.³³ A systematic and thoroughgoing collectivization of peasant farms began after the incorporation of these territories into the Soviet Union, and according to John N. Hazard, it was far more drastic here than in the Baltic states.³⁴ This prospect of total collectivization, added to the already existent pessimism about the future in Poland, undoubtedly sufficed to impel the average German peasant to abandon his Polish home.

IV

The immediate evacuation of Germans from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew district was conducted entirely by the special *Umsiedlungskommando* sent from the Reich rather than by local groups, as in the case of Estonia and Latvia. Despite the success of the method applied in the Baltic states, Heinrich Himmler, head of all repatriation activity, apparently decided that it was not suitable for operations in the Polish area. The lower cultural level and the lack of inner organization within the German folk group of Poland undoubtedly played a major role in his decision. Moreover, the Soviet Union was decidedly

³³ *Pravda*, 29 and 31 October 1939.

³⁴ John N. Hazard, 'The Impact of the War on Soviet Political and Economic Institutions,' in Zenk, ed., *Government in Wartime Europe*, p. 142.

hostile to any organized activity unrelated to purely Soviet bodies.

The 3 November treaty satisfied both contracting parties by providing for a special administrative body of German and Soviet members to handle the evacuation, and the communique of the following day was explicit on that score:

In no way may repatriates take the initiative in their departure. . . The frontier must not be crossed by individuals, but only in groups on foot or in trains and by permission of the plenipotentiaries. The repatriates must remain at their places of residence until they are requested to state their wishes. . . It is most essential that the procedure of the evacuation be complied with. . . A specially organized body will assume the preparatory work and the execution of all tasks in order to insure a speedy conclusion.³⁵

The communique stated further that the special mixed German-Soviet commission would be created by the two governments and that the evacuation would be conducted by specially appointed chief plenipotentiaries and their staffs, the German chief plenipotentiary making his headquarters at Luck. Since it was expected that the number of Ukrainian and White Russian repatriates from the German sphere of influence would be far larger than the number of German evacuees—a calculation that proved to be quite wrong—the Soviet government was to appoint two chief plenipotentiaries with residences at Chelm and Jaroslaw. Each chief plenipotentiary was to have attached to him a chief government representative of the other party, and both the plenipotentiaries and the representatives were to appoint their subordinate plenipotentiaries and government officials for each region and district.

This was a well-balanced dual scheme, built from the apex downward and based on administrative German-Soviet parallelism; it reflected perfectly the cult of bureaucratic planning

³⁵ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

predominant in both the Reich and the Soviet Union. The prospective evacuees could make contact with it at its lowest level only—the local plenipotentiaries.

Until the outbreak of the Soviet-German war there was little information on the method of organization and the work of the Soviet portion of the evacuation machinery. The Soviet press was absolutely silent on these points, and German sources limited themselves to very general compliments on 'the courtesy and helpfulness' of the Soviet representatives. Even after 22 June 1941, Soviet sources maintained their reserve. But an article by Dr. Leonhard Oberascher in the Vienna *Südost-Echo* of 5 July purported to give a detailed account of the composition of the local Soviet evacuation machinery and its methods. Oberascher himself had headed the German resettlement squad for the 1940 evacuation of Germans from Bessarabia, but he claimed that his article was based also on the experience of 'those members [of the squad] who were active in the resettlement of German families from Wolhynia, Galicia, and Bessarabia.'

According to Oberascher, junior officers were appointed to head local Soviet evacuation bodies; they were usually aided by a civilian, 'as a rule, by a Jew, who was obviously a member of the staff of NKVD, that is, of the troops of the People's Commissariat for Interior Affairs.' He stressed, however, that neither the officers nor the civilians were the true masters of these local Soviet commissions. Women were usually attached to their staff with the rank of 'inspectors' and 'these women were especially competent and trusted agents of the Commissariat of the Interior and were accordingly feared by the entire staff. They ruled the officers and the civilian agents in a matter-of-course way. They were all particularly distinguished party members and their task was to spy on the German members of the commission and to hold the Russian and Jewish members of the commission in check if they showed any inclination to become too tolerant.'

Oberascher's obvious anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic prejudices

and his love of sensational revelations make this description both biased and malevolent, but since it is the only one available, it is offered for what it is worth.

Abundant material on the organization and activity of the German evacuation bodies has been supplied by the German press and this makes it possible to reconstruct a fairly clear picture.

The more than 300 persons mobilized to organize the evacuation of Germans from the eastern regions of Poland were chiefly officials or honorary members of the National Socialist party,³⁸ recruited from the whole Reich and mainly on the recommendations of the VDA. *Der Volksdeutsche*, official organ of the league, noted proudly in March 1940 that all seven regional chiefs of the *Umsiedlungskommando* and the majority of local officials were active members of VDA. Obersturmbannführer Hoffmeyer headed the whole group with the rank of chief plenipotentiary.

The evacuation team was subjected to thorough training, with lectures on all general repatriation problems and seminars on specific practical aspects. Regional and local plenipotentiaries were appointed in advance and had assigned to them specialists on the particular Polish localities with which they were to be concerned. Medical, sanitation, food, and transport groups were designated and trained. The entire squad received thorough schooling in the aims of German nationalism with special reference to the German minorities in the Soviet-incorporated eastern Polish provinces.

The resettlement squad, with the exception of 37 members who remained in reserve, crossed the Soviet frontier on 8 December. Its field of operations covered a vast territory, stretching from the Carpathians across the Lwów-Przemysl region and the regions farther north to Bielsk, Lida, and even Druja on the

³⁸ 'Wir holen unsere Brüder heim,' in *Der Volksdeutsche*, December 1939.

Latvian border—an area almost 683 miles in length and nearly 310 miles in width, covering more than 211,000 square miles.³⁷

The entire territory was divided into seven regions: three in Wolhynia with centers at Luck, Kostopol, and Wladimir Wolynski; three in eastern Galicia with centers at Lwów, Stanisławów, and Stryj, and one in the Narew area with a center at Bielsk Podlaski.³⁸ Aiding the seven regional plenipotentiaries were 50 local officials, each responsible for 6 or 7 communities.³⁹ General Headquarters was at Luck and had at its disposal about fifty cars, exclusive of the motorized means of transport for the evacuees.⁴⁰

When the registration began on 15 December, Germans flocked to the designated centers on foot and in carts. 'Without any special organization, even the remotest cabins heard that the return to the Reich had begun, as soon as the German resettlement squad arrived,' wrote Thoss.⁴¹ Special commissions for registration had been set up in the towns and more important villages. Each prospective evacuee was required to fill out a card containing all such pertinent data, as the number of households and persons; name, age, place and date of birth; composition of the family; nationality and profession; address; religion; number of horses; mode of transportation chosen. Each evacuee received an identification card, which was supplemented by an identification badge when he reached the frontier.

Commenting on the conduct of the villagers who presented themselves for registration, Hellmuth Sommer asserted: 'The people here do not ask what their fate will be. They go unreservedly toward the Reich and trust the Führer, who will give them work and bread.'⁴² Another active member of the *Umsiedlungskommando*, Otto Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser, declared that

³⁷ Sommer, *op. cit.* p. 13.

³⁸ *Der Volksdeutsche*, March 1940.

³⁹ *New York Times*, 10 December 1939.

⁴⁰ Sommer, *op. cit.* p. 13.

⁴¹ Alfred Thoss, 'Das grosse Werk der Umsiedlung,' in *Volk und Reich*, 1940, *Heft* 1, pp. 62-3.

⁴² Sommer, *op. cit.* p. 18.

there could be noticed a solemn feeling among the peasants, a kind of calm confidence. They put relatively few questions. The village appeared to be a village in good order. The head of the family stated with calm the names and dates of the members of the household, underlined with a firm hand the lists filled up with names of the children and of the children of the children, so as not to forget any of them. The resettlement lists filled up quickly with families having an average of eight members. The men waited patiently. Hardly one of them complained about being allowed to carry away too little and having to leave too much behind. Hardly one of these peasants, who were abandoning houses and farms and fields and livestock, asked what he would be given in their place in the Reich.⁴³

Thus it appears that the registration was carried out on schedule and without incident, especially in the villages. Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser claimed that things went less smoothly in the towns, a situation which he ascribed to the presence among the evacuees of Poles, Ukrainians, and even Jews.⁴⁴

During the period of German-Soviet collaboration, German sources asserted vigorously that Soviet bodies had done everything in their power to facilitate the transfer,⁴⁵ even to dispensing with the usual border formalities and providing means of transportation. When the first Soviet train with German evacuees arrived at the frontier station of Hrubieszów, at the end of December, the Soviet officials furnished carts to spare the Germans the discomfort of walking the short distance separating the railway station from the bridge over the Bug River, which then marked the frontier. At first, the Soviet commissars permitted only those who were scheduled to leave on a particular day to cross the frontier, but they later relaxed their vigilance and relied entirely on the Reich representatives.⁴⁶ As the Berlin correspond-

⁴³ Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser, *op. cit.* p. 18.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10 December 1939.

⁴⁶ Sommer, *op. cit.* pp. 21-3.

ent of the *New York Times* reported on 15 January, the customs and the financial controls created no problem since 'the Germans were well aware of what was permitted to be carried away and Russian administrative bodies treated the entire resettlement action with much political tact.'

This picture of idyllic harmony seems much too perfect to be true; nevertheless the Reich officials and press withheld whatever complaints they may have had until after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war. Then Hitler gave free rein to his indignation, reproaching the Soviet Union with the fact that thousands of Germans were forced to leave their homes in order to escape from a regime which threatened them with boundless misery and eventual extermination.⁴⁷ Such allegations must of course be judged with due allowance for their very special bias.

V

German press and propaganda organs consistently referred to the transfer of the Germans from Wolhynia and Galicia as 'the great trek,'⁴⁸ thus creating the impression that the entire evacuation on the Soviet side of the frontier was conducted 'wie in alten Zeiten im Treck,' as Hoffmeyer, chief plenipotentiary of the Reich, phrased it.⁴⁹ The facts, however, do not support this implication. Of the total number of 128,000 evacuees, more than 95,000 reached the frontier by rail; exactly 25,000 arrived by road and cart (trek); 1,000 evacuees were brought to the border in eleven motorized truck groups, and over 7,000 arrived on foot.⁵⁰

Reich propagandists apparently judged the journey in railway cars, even when made under most unfavorable conditions, far

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, 22 June 1941.

⁴⁸ The word 'trek' will be used throughout to denote long caravans of covered wagons, in accordance with German practice.

⁴⁹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10 December 1939.

⁵⁰ Gerlach, *Auf neuer Scholle*, p. 12.

too prosaic for their purposes. Long lines of covered wagons creeping over the snow-covered Polish steppes, with the thermometer at 30 degrees below zero, were far more picturesque.

Serious doubt may be expressed regarding the absolute necessity for this procession of caravans involving approximately 20 per cent of the evacuees. Since the Soviet authorities were willing and able to put at the disposal of the German representatives the number of trains needed for the evacuation of three-fourths of the total number of repatriates, they were surely in a position to do as much for the remaining one-fourth. By that time the Polish railroads turned over to the Soviet Union had been repaired and were in satisfactory condition.

The reason for the trek must be sought elsewhere. The clue lies in the 4 November communique on the Soviet-German treaty, which stated in guarded words that 'certain limitations must be expected with regard to the property that can be taken away.' But, the communique went on, 'in so far as the transportation is conducted by road and not by rail, [the evacuees] will be authorized to carry away with them their personal property including a cart with two horses for each household and also a modest quantity of livestock.'⁵¹ Thus, in order to save at least a part of their livestock and movable property, Wolhynian and Galician peasants sent the old people, women, and children by train, and themselves proceeded by road, in some cases accompanied by wives and grown children. Had there been fewer children and had the winter been less severe, more of the evacuees would probably have given up the greater comfort of train travel for the material advantages of the trek.⁵²

The German resettlement squad devoted considerable time and energy to preparing this evacuation by road. Detailed itineraries with instructions on the length of each stage and the

⁵¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

⁵² Gerlach, *Auf neuer Scholle*, p. 12.

interval to be spent for rest were compiled. Feeding centers were set up for men and for cattle, and in order to avoid strain on these centers the speed of each caravan and the time of its arrival had to be carefully calculated. German engineers were called in to build emergency bridges over the rivers at the frontier to handle the road traffic. But as complicated as this organization was, it functioned smoothly and well.

An average caravan was composed of 212 carts or wagons drawn by two horses and carrying a load ranging from 6 to 20 zentners (661 to 2,204 pounds).⁵³ These caravans advanced in general at the rate of 28 to 31 miles a day, over poor roads deep in snow. The evacuees spent the night on the road but no one was allowed to sleep because of the severe cold and danger of frostbite. The nightly rest was frequently not longer than two hours, for otherwise the horses would have perished from the cold.⁵⁴ The last caravan was reported on 22 January 1940. Altogether, a total of 12,772 wagons with 22,461 horses crossed the Soviet-German frontier.⁵⁵

As indicated above, about 74 per cent of the evacuees reached the border in trains provided by the Soviet administration. The only difficulty encountered in this part of the transfer was in timing the evacuees' arrival at the frontier in such a way as not to impose too much strain on the receiving centers of the Reich.⁵⁶ But this problem, too, was solved with comparatively little trouble. The first train with evacuees left on 20 December, and by 10 January, 55 of the proposed total of 78 trains had brought

⁵³ 'Heimkehr aus Polen,' in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 14 January 1940. Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser refers to treks comprising 500 carts and extending for 9 or 10 miles. See *Das Buch vom grossen Treck*, p. 37.

⁵⁴ Sommer, op. cit. pp. 32, 59; *Das Schwarze Korps*, 15 February 1940.

⁵⁵ Gerlach, 'Ein neuer Abschnitt der deutschen Volksgeschichte,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, p. 150; Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 27, 30.

⁵⁶ Sommer, op. cit. p. 17.

64,000 resettlers to the frontier. The trains moved at an average speed of 30 to 40 miles a day, the trip lasting from 15 to 48 hours.⁵⁷

VI

The treaty of 3 November provided for ten points of transit at the border. Actually, only six were used, and these were not equally taxed. The most important was that at Przemyśl, which cleared 52,480 persons or 41 per cent of all the evacuees, although it was originally designed to shelter only 19,000. Hrubieszów accommodated 38 per cent, Terespol 10 per cent, and Prostken 8 per cent. Dorohusk and Nowy-Zagorz-Sanok played very minor roles, handling 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. All road caravans passed through Przemyśl or Hrubieszów.⁵⁸

Careful preparations were made at these transit points for the reception of the repatriates. According to a plan prepared well in advance, the returning *Volksgenossen* were to rest here after their trying journey, so that they might savor fully the friendly care and the high level of the Reich's organization, and also go through the process of acquiring Reich citizenship. Abandoned factories, railroad stations, schools, and other large buildings were converted into primitive but warm and comfortable shelters. In Hrubieszów, the camp was located in a big sugar factory which had somehow remained intact during the Polish-German fighting. The *Schutzpolizei* and the *Polizeireserve* undertook to transform this structure into a receiving center for thousands of Germans. They built a wooden floor covering 1,196 square yards, and piled it high with straw to a depth of more than three feet. Chairs and tables were manufactured on the spot, as well as large closets for the personal luggage of the evacuees. The huge factory boilers were heated until the thick walls were warmed.

⁵⁷ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 25; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 15 January 1940; *New York Times*, 13 January 1940.

⁵⁸ 'Die Umsiedlungsaktion abgeschlossen,' in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 February 1940.

Toilets and lavatories with hot and cold running water were constructed. For the cattle, stables were built and fodder prepared.⁵⁹ At Dorohusk, where no appropriate structure was available, policemen from the Reich and conscripted local labor built barracks which were later described as a model camp.⁶⁰

In these reception camps the evacuees stayed a day or two, and then set out on their way once more. Trains were put at their disposal by the Deutsche Ostbahn to convey them to the tremendous 'collector' camps near Lodz. The first such train arrived at the Pabianice camp on 23 December 1939; the last reached the Zgierz camp on 9 February, 49 days later.⁶¹

In all, 66 collector camps were prepared—33 to accommodate 25,000 evacuees in the Lodz area, 12 camps for 20,000 in the Pabianice region, 8 in the Zgierz area to take care of 10,000, and 13 for 7,000 in the neighborhood of Kalisz.⁶² Here again the most careful planning for the welfare of the repatriates was manifest. The scope of such planning is indicated by the fact that 10,000 stoves and 1,361,280 pounds of straw for bedding were supplied for these camps; 45,000 straw mattresses were manufactured, and 115,000 blankets were provided; stabling for 22,461 horses and storage space for 12,722 carts, as well as millions of pounds of food supplies, were also furnished. Arrangements for the preparation of food, and for adequate medical care were equally detailed and effective.⁶³

The evacuation of such a mass of persons in so brief a period and under extremely primitive conditions inevitably carried with it the threat of widespread disease and epidemics. According to all available data, the evacuees escaped this danger, although organized measures for sanitation and hygiene were taken only

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, 13 January 1940.

⁶⁰ Sommer, op. cit. pp. 27-9.

⁶¹ 'Die Umsiedlungsaktion . . .' (cited above).

⁶² Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 23.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 23; Sommer, op. cit. pp. 33-4.

after they had crossed the Soviet-German border. The treaty stated plainly that 'both contracting parties have taken steps to ensure the material and hygienic welfare of the migrants during their journey.'⁶⁴ But so far as one can judge from the facts at hand, German evacuees traveled through Soviet territory without any supervision of their medical or sanitation needs either on the trains or on the roads.

This situation gave rise to rumors that many of them had died from the cold and privation. After the evacuation was completed, *Vecherniya Moskva* categorically denied these reports and asserted that 'only 20 persons died on the way to the German frontier out of 80,000 men, women and children who left western Ukraine.'⁶⁵ This optimistic report was confirmed by German sources. Actually, the number of dead did not exceed 55; two-thirds of them were persons of 60 or older, and one-third were children who died from scarlet fever. This mortality was, however, more than compensated for by the 66 births which occurred during the journey.⁶⁶ The Germans ascribed these favorable results to the exceptional health of the evacuees, their resistance and cleanliness, and to the terrible cold which although trying to the travelers certainly checked the spread of epidemic diseases.⁶⁷

After the *Volksdeutsche* crossed the border they were cared for by medical and sanitation services of the Reich, a phase of the German planning which merits special attention. Early in December 1939, 220 members of the German Red Cross were sent to Lodz, where the entire repatriation activity was then centered. Part of this group were assigned to provisional camps for the repatriated Germans, others were sent to frontier stations or to points near the frontier—Lublin, Zamosc, Hrubieszów, Doro-

⁶⁴ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

⁶⁵ Quoted from *Posledniya Novosti*, 27 February 1940.

⁶⁶ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 20 January 1940.

⁶⁷ Sommer, op. cit. p. 48.

husk, Biala, Chelm. Shortly afterward the Red Cross personnel was quadrupled, and by the end of the transfer the staff included 20 nurses, 554 assistant nurses, and 265 helpers.⁹⁸ The German medical association assumed responsibility for the purely medical personnel and sent 45 physicians. Medical groups met the evacuees on the Soviet side of the frontier and took note of their special requirements. Five hospitals with hundreds of beds awaited prospective patients. A huge stock of medicaments was also at hand, including 40,000 anti-neuralgic pills and others in comparable quantities, remedies for frostbite, thermometers, bed linen, bandages and other similar items, tons of semi-liquid soap, and 10,000 liters of disinfecting fluids. The general consensus is that the medical and sanitation angles of the transfer were admirably handled.

VII

Inasmuch as the text of the 3 November treaty was never published, the exact content and wording of the stipulations regarding the transfer of property cannot be established. It is possible, however, to reconstruct the fundamental provisions partly from the above-mentioned official communique, and partly on the basis of other, especially German, sources.

The communique read:

Evacuation from the former Eastern Poland is based upon the same principle as that from the Baltic states, namely, that economic evacuation of the regions affected cannot take place. Certain limitations should, therefore, be expected with regard to the property the emigrants may take with them. Wherever transportation is effected by road and not by rail, each family may take away property up to the capacity of a wagon drawn by two horses. A modest quantity of livestock may also be taken away. The same rule will be applied to the tools necessary for the professional activity of artisans, physicians, artists, and other

⁹⁸ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 11 February 1940.

persons with specialized skills. All valuables left behind will be inventoried and included in the lists which will enable the evacuation body to appraise the entire property left behind by the evacuees. The interests of the evacuees with regard to the property they leave behind will be insured.⁶⁹

Various German sources gave a fuller and more adequate explanation of the guarded and equivocal wording of the official communique, and of its subsequent practical application. Dr. Theodor Zoeckler reported that in accordance with 'the Soviet concept that private ownership of land must not exist,' all land owned by evacuated Germans was automatically collectivized and transferred to local Soviets. 'We had to sacrifice the value of all our land property,' he wrote. 'The Soviets do not take into account the value of the land and of the soil, since they are considered the property of the state.'⁷⁰ All other immovable property of the evacuees was also taken over by the state.

With regard to movable property, according to Sommer, the Soviet-German treaty 'established with precision what the evacuees were authorized to take along with them and what they had to abandon on Soviet territory. . . German representatives will compile lists of all movable and immovable property [abandoned by the evacuees] and these are to be certified by German and Soviet representatives. These lists will be used as a basis for compensation of the German evacuees when they settle in the Reich.'⁷¹

The evacuees were promised that 'they would receive compensation for the property which was registered and appraised at the time of evacuation from their former fatherland.' But 'the appraisal made by the Russian members of the evacuation commission resulted in such low figures that if they were to be used [as a basis for compensation], the bulk [of the property] had to be considered as good as lost. . . The buildings were appraised

⁶⁹ Ibid. 5 November 1939.

⁷⁰ Zoeckler, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Sommer, *op. cit.* p. 14.

according to so-called peace prices, which at the present value of Polish money hardly amount to one-third or one-fourth of their true value. The German commission, however, accepted our own valuations with much understanding.' ⁷²

In effect, that meant that the Soviet Union was not bound by any joint appraisal made by the mixed Soviet-German commission. Soviet members of the commission appraised houses and buildings according to their own standards, and it appears that these figures were the only ones considered by the Soviets as a basis for interstate compensation. On the other hand, German members of the commission made their appraisals according to the figures submitted by the evacuees and promised to compensate them at the places of their resettlement for the full value of the property they abandoned. From the very start, therefore, a substantial difference existed between the amount the Reich could count on as a result of the Soviet Union's acquisition of the property of its repatriated compatriots and the obligations it assumed toward these compatriots.

It seems hardly necessary to note that UTAG was not and could not have been allowed to collaborate in the ultimate liquidation of the property of the evacuees in the region transferred to the Soviet Union. The liquidation was conducted directly by the Soviet state bodies.

With reference to the amount of the movable property that the evacuees were authorized to take with them, the treaty was explicit: used upper garments (one fur coat only), shoes, underwear for personal use, household objects, and money to the amount of 150 zlotys (\$28.50) per person. Cash amounts exceeding 150 zlotys, gold and platinum, silver in excess of 500 grams, precious stones, pearls, weapons, objects of art and antiquity, manufactured goods and cloths, metals, leather articles, printed material, photographs, legal documents, church registers, records,

⁷² Zoeckler, *op. cit.*

and interest- or dividend-bearing bonds and shares could not be removed from the country.⁷³

The stringency of the rulings was somewhat modified by the provision which authorized the evacuees to take with them the materials needed for the prosecution of their business or professional activity. Artisans, physicians, artists, and scholars were included in this privileged category.⁷⁴ 'Since it was not stated exactly how much of these could be taken with us, it was possible to take away much that would otherwise have been left behind,' Zoeckler related.⁷⁵

Those who traveled by rail or by car were permitted to take with them, besides their hand luggage, 110 pounds for the head of the family and 55 pounds for each family member. Those who chose an animal-driven wagon had the right to take away with them the wagon, 2 horses or 2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 pig, 5 sheep or goats, and 10 fowl.⁷⁶

German representatives on local evacuation commissions were often more severe in applying these restrictions than their Soviet colleagues. For example, a young peasant from the Luck district asked permission to take with him two prune trees he had raised with great effort and which he desired very much to replant in the place of his resettlement. 'The Soviet government representative who was present agreed to it with a kind smile,' but the peasant was nonetheless compelled to abandon the trees. The same sort of thing happened to an old woman who implored the commission to authorize her to take her dog, since the peasants of the neighborhood were permitted to take with them two horses. German members of the commission denied her petition as contrary to all rules of sanitation and hygiene. On the other hand, they granted a request of a 75-year-old man who wanted

⁷³ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 16-17.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

⁷⁵ Zoeckler, op. cit.

⁷⁶ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 16.

to take with him a bucketful of the Wolhynian soil as a souvenir of the land he had tilled all his life.⁷⁷

VIII

When the 128,000 *Volksdeutsche* had arrived safely in the territory under Reich control, they were then in the area selected for their resettlement. Had it not been for the severity of the winter, their immediate re-establishment in their new homes would seem to have been a matter of course. Granting the inadvisability of that procedure, it was reasonable to suppose that the evacuees would spend the remaining two or three months until the spring in the model collector camps at Lodz, Pabianice, and Zgierz.

The Reich, however, had other plans. Less than a fifth of the repatriated Wolhynian, Galician, and Narew Germans were kept in the collector camps; of the remaining number, 101,690 were transported to other camps within the Reich proper. According to Sommer, about 23,000 from Wolhynia and Galicia were expected in the Sudetenland. Approximately 40,000 were quartered in 180 camps in Saxony—in Frankenberg, Rabenstein, Oberfrohnau, Dresden, Pirna, Limbach, Bad Standau, and other towns. The rest were sheltered in Kurmark and Franken, and near Berlin, in Lichtenfelde-Süd.

These camps were set up with the usual care, with most of the immigrants quartered in old barracks, schools, hotels, and empty warehouses. Recreational and medical facilities were provided, and schools were established for the children. The repatriates were regarded as guests of the government and various sections of the National Socialist party vied with each other in trying to prove that the returning children of the fatherland were welcome in their country.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Sommer, op. cit. pp. 16-17.

⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 26-40; *New York Times*, 13 January 1940.

In the Reich camps 'they restored their forces in order to become strong and fit for new work,' Sommer explained. But then he goes on to say that 'the farmers and their grown children set out at once on their journey, with their carts and horses, household tools and livestock, and as soon as they arrived in Poznan or West Prussia they started the reconstruction work. Only old people and the sick, and mothers with small children remained behind in common camps, waiting for their husbands to prepare new homes and farms in the new German East. . . Women were eager to return to work in the field together with their husbands. And so, they waited and wondered where their husbands had gone to work.'⁷⁹ This description gives the impression of an almost chaotic shift of people from one place to another. The idea of women, old people, and children waiting in the Reich until the men and boys had prepared new homes for them was reasonable enough in itself. But why should entire families, comprising more than 100,000 persons, leave the region of Lodz for the Reich only to have all the able-bodied men return to the very places they had just left?

It is difficult to tell how long any group of repatriates remained in the Reich camps. But since 101,543 of the 128,000 evacuees from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew district had been settled by the Reich in the annexed Polish regions by the beginning of 1942, and it must be assumed that the 25,000 left in the camps at Lodz, Pabianice, and Zgierz were among the first to be resettled, it appears that at least 26,500—more than one-fifth of the entire number—spent almost two years in Reich camps.

This long enforced idleness is especially surprising since the evacuees from Eastern Poland included human material that was particularly precious in terms of the whole Reich transfer policy.⁸⁰ The age distribution, for example, presented a highly favorable picture, as shown by the following figures:

⁷⁹ Sommer, *op. cit.* pp. 52, 36-40.

⁸⁰ 'Altersaufbau und Berufsgliederung der volksdeutschen Umsiedler aus

	<i>Wolhynia</i>	<i>Galicia</i>	<i>Narew District</i>
Under 14.....	37.7%	28.9%	25.9%
Between 14 and 65..	58.8	67.3	68.2
Over 65.....	3.5	3.8	5.9

The abundance of children and the high birth rate among the Wolhynian and Galician Germans was the favorite theme of German evacuation literature. Since the birth rate in the Reich proper was lagging far behind the figure demanded by the ambitious political plans of its leaders, the *Kinderfreudigkeit* of the evacuees was described in lyrical tones.

The physical strength and well-being of the repatriates was also greatly praised, but certain features of the health picture were not wholly obscured by German propaganda. Dr. Gradmann inadvertently revealed that many of the children were rachitic and that infant mortality was high. Deafness was common among adults and Basedow's disease not unusual. German physicians described the condition of the repatriates' teeth as 'catastrophic.' The prevalence of premature senility among the peasants was striking. Gradmann also spoke guardedly of the 'danger of consanguineous unions which is inherent in high racial purity: frequent marriages among closely related families were unavoidable because of the exclusiveness of German villages.'⁸¹

The following figures reflect the social and economic structure of the three repatriated German groups:

	<i>Wolhynia</i>	<i>Galicia</i>	<i>Narew District</i>
Productive persons.....	55.0%	57.1%	49.6%
Independent persons without profession.....	2.0	1.1	4.3
Housewives without profession...	3.6	8.7	13.5
Other dependents without profession.....	39.4	33.1	32.6

Lettland, Estland, Volhynien, Galizien, dem Narewgebiet und dem Osten des Generalgouvernements,' in *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1 January 1941.

⁸¹ Gradmann, op. cit. p. 285.

The percentage of those engaged in farming in each area was as follows: Wolhynia, 85.9; Galicia, 65.6; Narew district, 28.8. Farming represented the basis of the economic structure of the first two groups. Not more than 10 per cent of Wolhynian *Volksdeutsche* and not more than 20 per cent of those from Galicia were engaged in trade and industry. In the Wolhynian group the cultural and educational level was admittedly unsatisfactory, the rate of illiteracy ranging from 20 to 30 per cent according to district. Many of the evacuees had even forgotten the German language. The small group of Germans from the Narew district was entirely different from the other Polish *Volksdeutsche* in both its age composition and economic structure, because Narew was so highly industrialized.

The problems of resettlement of the repatriates from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew district on new lands will be treated extensively in a subsequent chapter. It will suffice to note here that the majority of the evacuees were resettled within a relatively short time in the former western provinces of Poland annexed by the Reich. According to the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 11 January 1942, two years after the evacuation, 101,543 or about 80 per cent of the Germans were settled in the Warthegau, and 527 resettler families from Wolhynia, totaling more than 1,100 persons, were installed in Gau Danzig-West Prussia.⁸² German sources were silent regarding the fate of the remaining 25,000 German resettlers.

Czech sources maintain that a certain number of Wolhynian repatriates were settled in the Czech Protectorate. Eugen von Erdely states that 'in April 1941, in the purely Czech district of Charastava near Pilsen, eleven camps for German peasants from Wolhynia were set up; they were to be settled in Western Bohemia on Czech farms, the owners of which had been expelled

⁸² *Danziger Vorposten*, 16 October 1943.

to make room for them.' ⁸⁸ No data on the exact number of these settlers were revealed.

By the end of June, following the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, all of Wolhynia, eastern Galicia, and the Narew district were occupied by the armies of the Reich. On 1 August, Governor Hans Frank issued a proclamation announcing the incorporation of eastern Galicia into the Polish Government General as a special district. (Western Galicia had been made a part of it in October 1939.) The Reich showed no intention of sending back to Galicia the 55,400 Germans who had left it twenty months earlier. Wolhynia was organized into an administrative unit with the capital at Luck within the Reichskommissariat of Ukraine. The northwestern part of the Bialystock province (the Narew district) was incorporated into the Reich as the northern part of this province had been in the fall of 1939. Neither the Wolhynian German evacuees nor the evacuees from Narew were resettled in the places of their former residence.

⁸⁸ Erdely, *Germany's First European Protectorate*, p. 239.

IX

Transfer of the Germans from Soviet-Incorporated Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina

I

ROMANIA, with its 740,000 *Volksdeutsche*, contained the fourth largest German minority group in Europe, exceeded only by those in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Poland. There were 320,900 Germans in Transylvania, 225,000 in the Banat, 81,000 in Bessarabia, 75,500 in Bukovina, 12,500 in Dobruja; the rest were distributed throughout the country.¹ In 1939, the total number of Germans was estimated at approximately 800,000.²

Rumors of the imminent evacuation of these Germans from Romania followed close on Hitler's Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939, in which he announced the new Reich repatriation policy with regard to the German minorities scattered throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe. On 18 October a Havas dispatch from Cernăuți reported: 'Insistent rumors about the impending repatriation of Germans from Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania are circulating here.'³ On the same day, a cable from Cernăuți to *La France* spoke of a proposed evacuation of Germans from Bessarabia and Bukovina, but did not mention Transylvania. Nine days later, the Bucharest correspondent of the *New York Times* informed his newspaper that 'it is under-

¹ *Annuarul Statistic al României*, 1937-8, p. 60.

² M. M. Niculescu, 'Roumania,' in *Enemy Within*, p. 57.

³ *Posledniya Novosti*, 18 October 1939.

stood that the Germans of Bukovina and Banat would be expected to return to Germany; nothing is yet being said about the minority in Transylvania.' In all these rumors concerning the evacuation of the German minorities from Romania, the only province not mentioned was Dobruja.

The reaction of the German minorities to these reports was described as that of 'consternation,'⁴ or 'great anxiety.'⁵ It was not that Hitler and National Socialism had no enthusiastic adherents among the Romanian Germans, but rather that, as an article in the *Bulletin of International News* explained, 'it is one thing to sympathize with Nazi philosophy—such sympathy was perhaps inevitable. But it is another thing to be uprooted from the home and the farm, which has been in the family for generations, and be transferred to Germany, a strange country to the migrant, or to a hostile environment in Poland.'⁶

The prosperous Swabian peasants in the Banat were particularly disturbed. Other groups applied to the French consulate at Timisoara for advice, pointing out that their forefathers had been settlers from Alsace-Lorraine who had come to the Banat in the eighteenth century under the sponsorship of Maria Theresa.⁷ In Transylvania the reaction was more diversified. A Bucharest cable in the *New York Times* of 30 November stated that 'this German minority is not united; some favor repatriation but the majority are definitely opposed.' And according to the *Bulletin of International News* article cited above: 'The only German minorities in Romania likely to agree willingly to transfer were those of Bukovina, bordering on Soviet-occupied Poland, and those of Bessarabia, who have no chance of enlarging their land holdings and who fear possible Soviet invasion.'⁸

⁴ *New York Times*, 25 October 1939.

⁵ *Posledniya Novosti*, 18 October 1939.

⁶ M. B., 'German Minorities in Europe,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 9 March 1940, p. 290.

⁷ *New York Times*, 25 October 1939; *La France*, 22 October 1939.

⁸ M. B., 'German Minorities . . .' (cited above), p. 290.

Even the Germans who wanted to remove to the Reich apparently gave no overt signs of their desires. The Romanian government on the other hand seems to have admittedly favored the idea of the repatriation of its German citizens. Independent of possible nationalistic and political motives, financial considerations understandably played a part in determining the government's position. The Bucharest correspondent of the *New York Times* in a cable dated 27 October expressed certainty that the Romanian government would not object to the repatriation of the Germans, because 'Romanian exports to the Reich have obtained high levels, while imports remain below the normal figures. As a result, Germany owes Romania a considerable debt that could be canceled by the sale of properties of repatriated Germans.'

Neither the fall of 1939 nor the first part of 1940, however, witnessed any move on the part of the Reich to realize the rumored repatriation plan. But the altered political situation in the early summer brought to the fore what appears to have been the primary stimulus for the repatriation of most of the German minorities, namely, fear of the Soviet Union.

On 26 June, immediately following the fall of France, the Soviet government presented Romania with an ultimatum demanding the cession of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina. Advised by Germany to comply, the Romanian government acceded on the following day. The German Ambassador in Moscow had been officially informed of the Soviet demands two days before the presentation of the ultimatum. According to a statement made by German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop a year later, the Ambassador had immediately replied that the fulfilment of the Soviet territorial demands 'would lead to the disruption of the life of a large German settlement in Bessarabia'⁹—a stand that explains in part the Reich's decision to remove its countrymen.

⁹ *New York Times*, 23 June 1941.

II

Germans first settled in Bessarabia after it had been annexed by Russia under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812. Before 1842 some 8,000 Germans from Swabia, the Palatinate, and Southern Germany had accepted the invitation of the Russian government to settle in the province. The Russian census of 1897 counted 60,208 Germans (3.1 per cent of the total population), and a survey made by German national organizations in 1922 showed that there were 80,162 Germans in Bessarabia, thus indicating a tenfold increase within the course of one century. In 1939, despite the fact that between 1857 and 1939 about 25,000 Germans had emigrated from Bessarabia either overseas or to Dobruja, their number reached 86,000.¹⁰

According to official Romanian statistics, over 96 per cent of the Bessarabian Germans lived in villages, and almost 82 per cent of the working population were more or less directly connected with agriculture. They were also in large measure a landowning group. In 1938, German farmers held 741,300 acres of land. The average size of a German peasant farm in southern Bessarabia was 19.4 acres, while the average for Romanian farms did not exceed 9.8 acres.¹¹

On the whole, the Bessarabian Germans constituted a sound and prosperous local ethnic group with no apparent desire to leave the country of their adoption. Immediately after Bessarabia was placed under the rule of the Soviet Union, however, the Reich leaders concocted the theory that the Bessarabian Germans

¹⁰ T. von Stamati, 'Die Deutschen Bessarabiens,' in *Nation und Staat*, November 1940, p. 52; Wolf, *Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa*, p. 100; Karl Stump, 'Das Deutschtum in Bessarabien,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, October 1940, p. 504.

¹¹ Heinz Brunner, 'Biologische und soziologische Streiflichter auf das Südostdeutschtum,' in *Nation und Staat*, August-September 1940, pp. 346-67; Sepp Schobel, 'Zur Lage des deutschen landwirtschaftlichen Grundbesitzes in Rumänien,' in *Volk und Heimat*, October 1938; Stamati, *op. cit.* p. 54.

had long felt the urge to quit this region for the fatherland. Dr. Leonhard Oberascher, editor of the Vienna *Südost-Echo* and director of the evacuation from Bessarabia, asserted that German emigrants from Bessarabia, who in the 1920-30 period had preferred America, began to consider seriously a return to the homeland after the creation of the Third Reich: 'The painful administrative conditions prevailing in Bessarabia aggravated the latent unrest . . . every Bessarabian peasant wondered whether it would not be better to return to the Reich. Individual peasants attempted to return at their own risk.' Oberascher himself admitted, however, that the chief impetus toward repatriation resided in the political situation in stating that 'when the revision of the Romanian-Russian frontier severed the link between the Bessarabian Germans and the other German national groups of Romania, no one doubted that the day for the return into the fatherland had arrived.'¹²

Another German author, T. von Stamati, frankly attributed the evacuation of Bessarabian Germans exclusively to the newly created political situation, apart from any historical considerations: 'The political events made necessary the transfer of the Bessarabian Germans. . . Conditions having changed, this national group would not in any case have been able to maintain itself by its own means.'¹³ The same opinion was voiced by *Nation und Staat*: 'As a result of the transfer of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to Soviet sovereignty, the problem of repatriating the Germans of these regions, which had been considered even before, was given practical attention sooner than was expected. The fact that these Germans had to be repatriated was self-evident. . . The consequence of their coming under Soviet Russia's rule is that the position of these national fragments cannot be consolidated.'¹⁴

¹² *Südost-Echo*, 27 September 1940.

¹³ Stamati, *op. cit.* p. 54.

¹⁴ *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, pp. 32-3.

In Bukovina, the systematic settlement of Germans began in 1774 after the Austrian armies had occupied the province.¹⁵ In 1940, on the eve of its partition between the Soviet Union and Romania, Bukovina had a German population variously estimated at 70,000¹⁶ and 85,000.¹⁷ The economic structure of the Bukovina German group was far from being as sound and normal as that of the Bessarabian *Volksdeutsche*. Only 25.3 per cent of the Bukovina Germans were engaged in agriculture, and about a quarter of the total number of 23,000 German farmers owned no land. The average farm was much smaller than that in Bessarabia, about 45 per cent of the German peasants holding little more than an acre apiece.

On the other hand, the number of Germans in civil service was, for some time, abnormally high. Of the total German population, some 17 per cent (11,700) worked for the government or in the liberal professions.¹⁸ While Bukovina was a province of Austria-Hungary and while the state machinery was principally German, it was possible to maintain this disproportionate percentage. But after November 1918, when Bukovina became part of Romania, the Germans naturally lost their privileged position and found it very difficult to adjust themselves to the new situation.

These circumstances provided German propagandists with excellent material for proving the historical and sociological soundness of the 1940 evacuation of the Bukovina Germans. Dr. Wilhelm Arz attempted to formulate a theory on the 'basic' abnormality of the German ethnic group in Bukovina, indicating thereby that a voluntary, organized repatriation of Germans from Bukovina had long been overdue.¹⁹

¹⁵ Bahr, *Deutsches Schicksal im Südosten*, p. 162.

¹⁶ Wolf, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Bahr, *op. cit.* p. 162.

¹⁸ 'Die deutschen Volksgruppen der neuen Rückführung in ihrem bäuerlichen Bestand,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, August 1940, pp. 281-2.

¹⁹ Arz, 'Das Deutschtum des Buchenlandes,' in *Nation und Staat*, November 1940, p. 22.

Nevertheless, it was not until the summer of 1940 that any trend toward repatriation made itself manifest. The sudden and immediately satisfied demands of the Soviet Union on Romania brought about the partition of Bukovina; the northern area was incorporated into the Soviet Union, while the southern part was retained by Romania. The German minority was thus split into two approximately equal parts. As in Bessarabia, the radical and abrupt change in the national and social status of the region brought the repatriation problem to the fore.

III

Negotiations for the proposed transfer of the German minorities began in Moscow on 25 July. They lasted for forty-two days, ending in a treaty signed on 5 September 1940. Neither its text nor any of its content has ever been published; both sides issued brief releases announcing the ratification of the treaty and nothing more.

According to Alfred Thoss, the stipulations of this treaty were 'in the main identical with those of earlier treaties; once more, the resettlement was to be voluntary for every German.'²⁰ There are no indications that the unrestricted right of option was denied the *Volksdeutsche* in practice. The German *Umsiedlungskommando* sent by the Reich had no authority on Soviet territory to enforce the evacuation of the Bessarabian and Bukovina Germans, although they certainly were in a position to exercise strong psychological pressure.

There is also no information to suggest compulsion on the part of the Soviet authorities. Neither before nor after the Soviet-German break did the abundant German literature on the events surrounding the transfer mention acts of political terror, national discrimination, or social violence directed against Germans. On the contrary, probably because they foresaw the coming removal,

²⁰ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 39.

the Soviet authorities showed special consideration for the German population. As noted by *Nation und Staat*, 'the bulk of the German population in both the ceded provinces remained in their homes according to instructions from the German authorities. . . They were not in the least interfered with either with regard to their life or their property. From the outset, Russian troops and authorities showed them the most complete consideration.'²¹

The Soviet government did not merely refrain from using forcible means to induce the *Volksdeutsche* to leave. According to Dr. Oberascher,²² the local Soviet authorities even hoped that not more than 30 to 50 per cent of the Bessarabian Germans would opt for transfer to Germany, and tried to prevent the younger German generation from registering in the repatriation lists. Although the 5 September agreement provided that the decision of the parents was valid for the entire family, Soviet representatives demanded that the children appear in person before the German-Soviet commission to cast their votes. Oberascher asserted that the Soviet members of the commission 'attempted by continuous questioning of the children to separate them from their parents, and frightened them so, that as a result, the children declared their decision to stay.'

'This Soviet attempt at sabotage ended in failure,' Oberascher reported. This failure is explained by official German historiography by the contention that the Bessarabian Germans had from the very beginning made up their minds in favor of repatriation. According to Thoss, 'in Bessarabian German villages it was almost unnecessary to hang posters on the houses notifying the Germans to register for the forthcoming evacuation and enumerating what everyone was entitled to take with him. These

²¹ 'Abtretung Bessarabiens und der Nord Bukowina an die Sowjetunion,' in *Nation und Staat*, August-September 1940, p. 399.

²² Leonhard Oberascher, 'Sowjetrussische Sabotage-Kunst,' in *Südost-Echo*, 5 July 1941.

people eagerly awaited the day when they might register; in most cases they donned their holiday clothes and asked only about the best way to pack their belongings and when could their transport leave. . . In certain villages, all the Germans had registered for evacuation in the space of only a few days.' ²³

This description of the attitude of the Bessarabian Germans is corroborated by the Countess Waldeck, who visited the assembly transit camps at Galati and talked with the evacuees. 'Old and young, rich and poor,' she wrote, 'expressed a minimum of regret and a boundless confidence in their future in the Führer's Germany. These prolific descendants of prolific colonists were returning to Hitler's Germany as to the Promised Land.' ²⁴

These reports are undoubtedly exaggerated and embellished. It is difficult to believe that all the repatriates opted for transfer purely on national and patriotic grounds, especially since they did not represent a solidly organized National Socialist community. And if the Bessarabian Germans did register for evacuation to a man, it must have required powerful stimuli to set this mass of people in motion, deeply rooted as they were. As in the previous cases of evacuation involving the Baltic countries and the Polish regions, the decisive factor for the Bessarabian Germans was the tremendous fear of sovietization. Bessarabian Germans, a predominantly prosperous landowning group, knew the fate that was in store for them as kulaks. They knew that by absorption into the kolkhozes they would lose the farms which they had acquired with so much toil and effort.

This, however, was not the Bessarabian Germans' only reason for fearing the Soviet regime. The Bessarabian Communists, who had now acceded to power, had political scores of a bloody nature to settle with them. In September 1925, in the region of

²³ Alfred Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen aus Bessarabien, der Bukovina und der Dobrudscha,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, p. 164.

²⁴ Waldeck, *Athene Palace*, pp. 307-8.

the village of Tatar-Bunar, a peasant revolt against the Romanian administration, organized by the local Communists, was suppressed by the Romanian police with the assistance of the army and the marines. According to Stamati, the German colonists, who were strongly anti-Communist and wished to prove their loyalty to the Romanian authorities, took a very active part in the suppression of this revolt.²⁵ Soviet sources affirm that the village of Tatar-Bunar and a number of neighboring villages were entirely burned down, and that over a thousand peasants were 'killed in the fighting and murdered in captivity,' while more than five hundred were turned over to a military court.²⁶ In the memory of the Bessarabian peasantry and of the Communists, the episode of Tatar-Bunar had left a bitterness that presaged no good for the German colonists.

Countess Waldeck recalls that as early as 27 June, a few days before the entry of Soviet troops into Bessarabia and Bukovina, the first German refugees from these regions had begun to appear in the Hotel Athene Palace in Bucharest. 'No one else in the two provinces had any inkling as yet that the Russians were coming. The German landowners had lost no time in getting out while the going was good. What made them flee in such a hurry was not so much fear of the invading Bolsheviks as fear that the people of the two provinces themselves, once they learned of the coming of the Russians, might get out of hand and begin to loot and kill.'²⁷

The mass evacuation of the Bukovina Germans was motivated by this same fear of sovietization, intensified by the existent instability of their economic situation.

²⁵ Stamati, *op. cit.* p. 54.

²⁶ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopaedia*, vol. 6, p. 31; Kritzmann, *Boyarskaya Rumynia vo vlasti Gitlera*, p. 22.

²⁷ Waldeck, *op. cit.* p. 109.

IV

In the *Südost-Echo* of 27 October 1940, Dr. Oberascher quoted Romanian estimates of 30 June that put the total number of Germans in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia—the former Romanian regions taken over by the Soviet Union—at 122,400 persons. He indicated, however, that these figures did not provide a fair estimate of the number of Germans to be transferred, and that the results of the transfer might deviate substantially from the Romanian figures. The difference indeed proved to be considerable, for the number of Germans evacuated from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was 135,989²⁸—that is, all the Germans listed in Romanian statistics to the very last man, plus 13,589 or an additional 11 per cent.

The number evacuated also exceeded the German figures on the size of the German population in these two regions. In 1940 German sources reported 85,000 in Bessarabia, although Romanian data put the figure at about 81,000; the number of evacuees from Bessarabia, however, according to the German *Einwandererzentrale* was 93,548, or about 8,500 in excess of the German estimate, and about 12,500 more than the Romanian.

The available information on Northern Bukovina is contradictory. *Neues Bauerntum* estimated the number of Germans in that area that came under Soviet rule at 27,700 (15,000 of them in Cernăuți and its environs), and it was expected that no more than 25,000 Germans would be repatriated from this section.²⁹ Official Romanian statistics listed 35,000 Germans in Northern Bukovina. The number of Germans evacuated was 42,441, or almost 15,000 more than the first figure and nearly 7,500 more than the second.³⁰

²⁸ Tornau, 'Alter und Beruf der Umsiedler,' in *Das Reich*, 11 May 1941.

²⁹ 'Die deutschen Volksgruppen . . .' (cited above), p. 282.

³⁰ Karl G. von Loesch, 'Der Sieg des Volksgedanken,' in *Volk und Reich*, December 1940, p. 798.

Where did these additional thousands of Germans come from? It is possible that a certain number of them were assimilated (Romanianized, Ukrainianized, or Russified) elements of German origin. In normal times they would not have considered themselves Germans, and therefore would not have been registered as such either by Romanian or German census counts. Because of social standing or political views, however, many of them may not have wished to live under the Soviet regime, and the only legal means of leaving was to be transferred under the German-Soviet agreement. Thus they availed themselves of their opportunity by recalling their German descent. But the number of such persons could hardly have amounted to either 8,500 in Bessarabia or 7,500 in Bukovina, much less the higher differentials.

By analogy with the evacuation experience in the Baltic states and in Wolhynia, there is every reason to believe that a considerable number of stateless persons, White Russian emigres, Ukrainian nationalists, and some bourgeois and anti-Soviet elements were included in the total of persons evacuated from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina on the basis of the 5 September agreement. The German evacuation authorities seem to have been very lenient on this score, putting no obstacles in the way of those who wished to be placed on the lists of Germans to be repatriated. Nor did the Soviet authorities oppose the departure of persons who might be anti-Soviet. So far as can be determined from the available information, there were no serious disagreements between the Soviet and German authorities concerning either the interpretation of the repatriation agreement, or its application.

The evacuation from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was carried out with extraordinary speed. The accord originally stipulated that it was to be completed within two months—that is, before 15 November. The actual evacuation required little more than half the allotted time.

The first transport from Bessarabia left on 23 September; the last reached Galati one month later, an average of 3,017 persons having been evacuated each day. The evacuation from Northern Bukovina lasted somewhat longer—from 26 September to 14 November.⁸¹ In view of the fact that 82 per cent of the Bessarabians and 25 per cent of the Bukovinians were peasants, who were permitted to take with them livestock to the extent of two oxen or two horses, one cow, and ten fowl per family, the number of animals involved in the transfer attained considerable proportions. The removal of so vast a mass of persons and property within a period of only seven weeks was a formidable task, which the German transport organization succeeded in carrying out with its usual efficiency.

In arranging the evacuation from Bessarabia the Reich did not enlist the help of either voluntary or mobilized local German elements among the evacuees themselves, as was the case in Estonia and especially in Latvia. In Bessarabia, as in Galicia and Wolhynia, the task was assigned to an *Umsiedlungskommando* sent from the Reich. *Nation und Staat* stressed the fact that 'during the preceding transfers, valuable experience had been gained'⁸² that could now be utilized, and apparently the one thing the Germans had learned was not to entrust so complicated and difficult a job to local volunteers, however zealous they might be, unless the conditions were exceptional as in the case of the Baltic states.

The 5 September agreement (Article 2) provided for the appointment of a mixed German-Soviet resettlement commission in which the Reich was to be represented by a *Hauptbevollmächtigte* (chief delegate) and the Soviet Union by a *Hauptvertreter* (chief representative), with headquarters at Tarutino. The *Umsiedlungskommando* for Bessarabia, under Dr. Oberascher, numbered 299 men, including doctors, interpreters, and couriers;

⁸¹ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 69.

⁸² *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 32.

in charge of transportation, in so far as it was carried out by trucks, was a 300-man *National Sozialistischer Kraftfahrer Korps* (NSKK) squad. The 152 German settlements in Bessarabia were distributed among four regional headquarters, comprising 30 to 40 villages each and located in Mannsburg, Beresina, Albota, and Chisinău. *Gebietsbevollmächtigte* (regional delegates) were appointed to direct these offices, and within each region, *Ortsbevollmächtigte* (local delegates) were appointed to supervise individual settlements.³³ The regional delegates were responsible to the central authority at Tarutino and local agents to the regional delegates. It was the task of the local delegates, together with an equal number of Soviet representatives to register those Germans who wished to be repatriated and to evaluate the homes, harvests, and other property left behind.

A similar procedure was followed in Northern Bukovina, where headquarters were established at Cernăuți. The *Umsiedlungskommando* there was headed by Standartenführer Hoffmeyer, who had directed the evacuation of Germans from the eastern regions of Poland in 1939-40.³⁴

V

The stipulations of the 5 September treaty were 'in the main identical' with those of the earlier German-Soviet agreement on the transfer from the Soviet-incorporated areas of Poland, not only with regard to the transfer of persons, but with regard to the transfer of property. Articles 2 and 6 of the treaty practically repeat the corresponding provisions of the 1939 accord.³⁵

The resettlers were allowed to take with them only a little cash. Before leaving they had to surrender all of their savings to the Soviet banks, and these sums were later to be accounted for

³³ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 39, 50.

³⁴ Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen aus Bessarabien . . .' (cited above), p. 167.

³⁵ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 39.

to the Reich by the Soviet government. Dr. Oberascher reports indignantly that when the day of departure came, the local commissars, in flagrant violation of the agreement, suddenly and as one man refused to accept from the evacuees more than 250 rubles (25 *Rentenmarks* or \$10.07) per family or 'homestead.' Oberascher concludes from the unanimity of this action that it was ordered by Moscow.

To all the arguments of *Umsiedlungskommando* representatives, who pointed out that the removal of larger sums by the evacuees themselves was forbidden, the Soviet representatives only shrugged their shoulders. When the members of the German commission themselves began to accept the excess monies from the evacuees, with the intention of leaving it on deposit with their central command until later German-Soviet discussion could settle the fate of these sums, they were threatened with arrest. Oberascher does not state how this conflict was resolved, but contents himself with a tirade to the effect that 'of course, some kind of solution of this situation had to be found, as it was inadmissible to let the peasants throw away their money or to allow the Soviets to "socialize" the peasants' money in this way.'³⁰

Oberascher also declared that the local Soviet authorities obstructed in every way the sale by the German peasants in Bessarabia of the property they were leaving behind. The treaty gave them the right to sell this property—if they could find buyers for it. Unable therefore to forbid the sale, the Soviet officials blocked the purchase, posting guards at the outskirts of German villages to prevent the Russian and Bulgarian peasants from taking from the German farms the property they had bought. 'After several days,' Oberascher notes, 'the sales ceased, and German peasants simply left their produce and furniture to the mercy of the winds.'

³⁰ Oberascher, 'Sovjetrussische Sabotage-Kunst' (cited above).

In making these broad statements Oberascher undoubtedly exaggerates. Thoss, an equally authoritative German source, in describing the evacuation of Germans from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dobruja, mentions that Bessarabian German peasants 'packed their trunks and sold their furniture to Russians, Bulgarians, and Romanians, whose heavily loaded carts could be seen everywhere on the roads.'³⁷ Thoss published his article a few months before the rupture of Soviet-German relations; Oberascher's appeared two weeks after the break. The obvious bias in each case explains the discrepancies between their stories, both of which are probably partially true.

Similar discrepancies seem to characterize accounts of the export of livestock and of the goods, provisions, furniture, and implements belonging to the farmers. Each peasant homestead was permitted to take, in addition to the previously mentioned livestock, 250 kilograms (550 pounds) of farm products.³⁸ Oberascher claims that local Soviet authorities also sabotaged this most essential provision of the 5 September agreement: 'When the wagons were leaving the village, Soviet authorities, availing themselves of capricious arguments, started to unharness one horse after another.' It may be granted that such cases did occur. That they were the general rule is improbable, especially in the light of the fact that as early as 28 September, five days after the beginning of the evacuation from Bessarabia, some 6,000 carts and 12,000 horses stood massed on the Galati military airfield, which had been converted into a central transit camp.³⁹ Even Oberascher admits that 'in most cases it was possible, although only with the greatest effort, to prevent such interference.'

The German property left behind, in so far as it was not subject to nationalization according to Soviet regulations, was to be listed in special records made out in Russian and German. Its

³⁷ Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen aus Bessarabien . . . (cited above), pp. 164-5.

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 164-5.

³⁹ *New York Times*, 29 November 1940.

value was to be assessed by the German and Soviet parties jointly, and subsequently credited to the Reich.⁴⁰ The *Umsiedlungskommando* played the part, as one of its district directors expressed it, of

banker for the whole group of repatriates and of wholesale agent for the population of 22 former villages (in the case of my district) dealing with a foreign state. . . Cows, sheep, houses, stables, etc., for considerable amounts have to be dealt with. Lists of prices and values, the average prices, those before the occupation by Soviet troops, prices for stone, brick and clay construction, and many others begin to pile up on my writing table. I have numerous bank reports on amounts in lei and rubles paid in at various places. The numbers and data recorded and paid here show that this group of repatriates is a much richer one than the one we had to do with during the winter in Wolhynia. I often receive from one single place more thrift rubles than I used to receive from my whole district in Wolhynia, sometimes even as much as double and triple.⁴¹

The liquidation of all this accumulated wealth constituted, however, a difficult and thankless task for the *Umsiedlungskommando*. In the article quoted above, Oberascher declares that the Soviet commissions systematically 'sabotaged the process of the liquidation of properties in all its phases. It began by protests against the evaluation of the properties that had been left behind.' He cites as a typical instance the case of 'an average town house in Bessarabia.' The German commission valued it at 40,000 lei (\$280). After Soviet authorities had devaluated the leu, this amounted to 200 *Rentenmarks* (\$80.66), but the Soviet commission deemed even this estimate excessive.

In general, according to Oberascher, the Soviet representatives were at first opposed to any evaluation on the basis of the cost of the properties, so that the German commissions 'were

⁴⁰ *Grenzboten*, 30 August 1940; Thoss, *Die Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 39.

⁴¹ 'Der grosse Treck ins Reich,' in *Wille und Macht*, 1 February 1941, p. 15.

compelled to renounce Soviet co-operation entirely and to effect the evaluation by themselves and for their own purposes, that is, with a view to settling accounts with the evacuees after they had been established in the Reich.' If this assertion is correct, it indicates the complete collapse of German-Soviet collaboration in the matter of the liquidation of the evacuees' property. The German commission apparently carried out the evaluation of properties independently so that the Reich would have some basis for compensating the evacuees with the equivalent of what they had left behind in their former homeland. But since this estimate was not approved by the Soviet representatives, it had no binding effect on the Soviet Union in the subsequent accounting to the Reich. Oberascher relates that the local Soviet commissions 'postponed the establishment of the property lists and the property estimates week after week—until the day of the departure of the German commission arrived. This explains the fact that the final negotiations concerning the property could not be conducted locally and had to be concluded subsequently in Moscow.' Summing up the property aspect of the evacuation, Oberascher states bitterly that 'the Reich received only a trifling sum for the property of the Bessarabian Germans, but fully compensated the German resettlers for all their property.'

The situation in Northern Bukovina seems to have been more favorable to the Germans. According to a reliable German source, the lists containing the enumeration of property left behind by the transferred Germans were also approved by the Soviet resettlement authorities.⁴²

VI

The problem of transportation from Bessarabia and Bukovina was far more complex than in other transfer operations of this

⁴² Du Prel, *Das Generalgouvernement*, p. 65.

kind. From Latvia and Estonia it had been possible to transport evacuees directly by sea aboard German ships, and in the case of the Polish regions and Lithuania there was a common frontier with the Reich. Bessarabia and Bukovina, however, do not border on the Reich, and so the emigrants had to be 'transferred home-wards through the territories of two (or even three) foreign states.'⁴³

The evacuation from Bessarabia presented the more serious problem because the German evacuation authorities chose to add further complications to the absence of a common border with the Reich. Logically, Bessarabia's geographical position would suggest either of two repatriation routes, the shorter leading north from Bessarabia through Bukovina and Soviet eastern Galicia into the incorporated Polish regions destined to be the new home of the Bessarabian Germans, the other crossing from east to west through Romania and Hungary into Southern Austria, whence the repatriates would still have to make the long journey through Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia (or Slovakia) to the Warthegau and Danzig-West Prussia. Neither of these two routes was chosen. Instead the evacuees followed a third and longer route, described by *Nation und Staat* as follows: 'They [the evacuees] will first be brought by wagons or trucks sent by the Reich to the embarkation ports of Reni and Chilia at the mouth of the Danube, or to the first reception camp at Galati. From there they will sail on Danube steamers as far as the migration camps at Zemun and Prahovo in Yugoslavia, from which point the journey will be continued by train.'⁴⁴ *Nation und Staat*, however, neglected to mention that the continuation of the journey would necessitate the crossing of Hungary and Southern Austria, whence only a long and complicated trip would bring the evacuees to the Polish regions.

No explanation for the choice of this particularly long and

⁴³ *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* October 1940, p. 33.

circuitous route has appeared in the German press, but on the basis of the political situation in the early autumn of 1940, certain deductions may be valid.

The shortest route, passing through Soviet eastern Galicia, presented the Reich with the greatest difficulties from the political standpoint. The transportation of some 93,000 Bessarabian Germans across Soviet territory would leave the Reich dependent on the good will of the Soviet authorities, and would bring the repatriates into direct and presumably deleterious contact with the Soviet Union. Despite declarations of mutual friendship, there was no guarantee that the Soviet government would permit such a mass transit. And should the request be granted, the Reich would be in the position of having received a favor from its Soviet partner. It is also possible that the directors of the evacuation felt no real confidence in the capacity of the Soviet railways and highways to handle so vast a migration.

The motives which induced the Reich to ignore the Romania-Hungary itinerary are less clear. Political considerations could not have played a role in the decision. At that time Romania had already joined the Axis and the transfer of the repatriates through this country would certainly have presented fewer difficulties than their passage through Yugoslavia whose population was far from pro-German. It is possible that the Romanian railways did not have the facilities for transporting such a mass of men, livestock, and property within so short a period, but the Reich could have sent its own trains, as it did somewhat later for the evacuation of Germans from Northern Bukovina.

It would seem then that the choice of the roundabout route across Yugoslavia and Hungary in preference to the two shorter routes was not the result of either Reich foreign policy or of technical difficulties, but was prompted by quite different motives. The German officials in charge of the repatriation were not at all pleased with the prospect of the immediate transfer into new territory of some 93,000 Bessarabian Germans, who

were, in a manner of speaking, in a 'raw state.' As in the case of the evacuation from Wolhynia and Galicia, they preferred that the repatriates first pass through a number of intermediary camps during which process they could be subjected to a preliminary survey and a redistribution according to their political and racial reliability, occupational status, and similar factors. During the comparatively long passage through Galati, along the length of the Danube, in Belgrade, Hungary, and Southern Austria, this task could be accomplished much more thoroughly and surely than during the much shorter railway trip through Romania and Hungary.⁴⁵

Furthermore, there was no reason to accelerate the establishment of the Bessarabian resettlers in their new homes in the annexed Polish provinces. The process of settling the Germans previously evacuated from the Baltic countries and from Wolhynia and Galicia had proved to be much slower than expected. These repatriates were by no means completely installed on the farms and in the enterprises taken from the banished Poles; tens of thousands were still in various camps on Reich soil. There could be no question, therefore, of the immediate transfer into the annexed Polish regions of the 93,000 evacuees from Bessarabia. Any possible delay was desirable. Having removed the evacuees from Soviet territory with great dispatch, there was no longer any need for haste, and the circuitous route suited the Reich's intentions admirably.

On the basis of the fragmentary data published to date, a possible reconstruction of the transfer may be formulated. On 23 September, nine days after the *Umsiedlungskommando* began its work, the first transport of evacuated Germans left a Bessarabian village; it was composed of 800 persons traveling in 40 trucks provided by the Reich. Of the total number of evacuated Ger-

⁴⁵ A preliminary statistical survey of the 93,000 Germans repatriated from Bessarabia was conducted during their trip on the lower and middle Danube. (*Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1941, no. 7, p. 150.)

mans, 30,441 (34.4 per cent) were transported by truck, this means of travel being utilized mainly for women, old people, children, and for those peasants who had no horses of their own and therefore could not travel by cart.⁴⁶ The long columns were divided into sections, each under the command of an NSKK group. Every night the evacuees were bivouacked in camps, where rations were served to them from special food trucks.⁴⁷ These motor transports were bound for Reni and Chilia. When the autumn rains made the roads impassable for the heavy trucks and vans, railway trains and wagons were utilized to carry the evacuees to Reni and Chilia.

According to Thoss, 'the Soviet representatives obligingly placed at the disposal [of the Germans] a greater number of trains than had been stipulated.' This facilitated the evacuation of 22,377 persons, or nearly one quarter of the total. The remainder traveled to the frontier in carts (15,373 persons or 17.4 per cent), and covered wagons (20,301 persons or 22.9 per cent). The first trek left on 4 October. The average number of wagons per trek was approximately 140, and the journey usually took ten days or more. Altogether the trek brought 11,360 wagons and 22,922 horses to the border. In line with the choice of the evacuees from Galicia and Wolhynia, the Bessarabian peasants preferred a long and difficult journey by cart and wagon because of the stipulation that evacuees traveling in this fashion could take two horses and a cartload of property with them.⁴⁸ Those who traveled by train had to leave much of their property behind.

Countess Waldeck, who was present at the arrival of the first group on Romanian territory, wrote: 'I saw a spectacle which reminded me of engravings of the American frontier era: a long line of wagons, covered with white canvas, oxen-drawn, some-

⁴⁶ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 64.

⁴⁷ *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 November 1940.

⁴⁸ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 62, 64, 65, and 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen aus Bessarabien . . .' (cited above), p. 165.

times with a colt or a horse running alongside. It was strange to find the covered wagon, America's symbol of individual pioneering, become Europe's symbol of the totally protective state.'⁴⁹

Danubian steamship lines placed 28 steamers at the disposal of the evacuees. Of the total of 88,492 persons, some 20,044 (22.7 per cent) embarked at Chilia, 39,905 (45.1 per cent) at Reni, and 28,523 (32.2 per cent) at Galati. Approximately 5,000 German residents of Bessarabia who were not there during the Soviet occupation, mainly because they were serving in the Romanian army, now joined their countrymen, and brought the total number of evacuees to 93,548.⁵⁰

Galati was made the central assembly and departure station on the long and difficult road to repatriation. Motor loads of emigrants from Chilia and Reni arrived there every day. Several weeks before the start of the evacuation, uniformed Germans had arrived in Galati with 500 trucks and had converted the former military airfield into a huge camp.⁵¹ Sleeping quarters for 5,000 persons had been prepared in 8 tremendous hangars. Numerous tents had also been pitched so that, if necessary, 25,000 persons could be accommodated at the camp, and in fact, for one brief period, there were more than 20,000 persons there.

All sanitary, hygienic, and police measures requisite for the proper conduct of so large a project had been taken. A general hospital that could accommodate 300 persons, a maternity hospital, and one for contagious diseases had been provided. At the Galati railway station a hospital train stood in readiness; a hospital ship was anchored in the harbor, and a motorized hospital column was slowly proceeding across Hungary. From 25 to 50 Red Cross nurses and 17 doctors supervised the medical and sanitary needs. Large trucks brought foodstuffs from all parts of

⁴⁹ Waldeck, *op. cit.* p. 305.

⁵⁰ Thoss, 'Das grosse Werk der Umsiedlung,' in *Volk und Reich*, 1941, Heft 1, p. 64, and *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 61.

⁵¹ *New York Times*, 29 September 1940.

Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, to avert depletion of supplies in the Galati area. The food was good and rich, and was selected with an eye to what the Bessarabian Germans were accustomed to eating.⁵²

The Romanian authorities had furnished all possible help during the construction of the camp. Local *Reichsdeutsche*, especially women, had also given their aid in making the place ready for the repatriates. Subsequently, 40 *Volksdeutsche* girls from the Banat and Transylvania were assigned to the camp, as were 60 girls from Galati and Bucharest.⁵³

Apparently the repatriates did not remain long in the Galati camp. Two days after the evacuation started, the first contingent of 1,300 Germans left Galati on a Danube steamer bound for Belgrade.⁵⁴

The second major stop was made in Yugoslavia. Here, as in Galati, the most thorough preparations had been made for the reception, medical care, and further travel of the repatriates. The German minority in Yugoslavia, numbering some 550,000, was strongly National Socialist in its sympathies; it received financial aid from the Reich and in turn supported Reich policies vigorously.⁵⁵ As early as 21 August, a month before the evacuation from Bessarabia began, an order issued by the leader of this minority group announced that thousands of German repatriates from Bessarabia would spend an indefinite time in camps to be established by the Germans of Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ A month later, the Belgrade correspondent of the *New York Times* cabled that 'about 300 laborers worked through today finishing the new German camp at Zemun, across the Sava River from Belgrade.'⁵⁷

⁵² Waldeck, op. cit. pp. 306-7.

⁵³ *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 33; Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 61.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, 29 September 1940.

⁵⁵ Covacs, *The Untamed Balkan*, p. 204.

⁵⁶ *New York Times*, 22 August 1940.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 15 September 1940.

Thoss gives a detailed description of the Zemun camp.⁵⁸ Before it could be started, 50,000 cubic meters of sand had to be leveled; previously in this area one sank into the sand up to the knees. Some 28,000 square meters of wooden flooring were laid; 12,000 square meters of road were lined with 5-square centimeter planks. A water main, connected with the Belgrade water system, was also constructed, utilizing 6,400 meters of pipe. The entire camp was equipped with electric light, for which 4,400 outlets were installed. The camp contained 72 tents, many of them 90 meters in length and 10 to 15 in width. These were the sleeping and eating quarters; the 4 kitchen halls, pantry, 24 washrooms, 8 shower rooms, dressing room, and a first aid station were somewhat smaller. The Red Cross furnished a large mobile field hospital containing 32 barracks.

The smaller camp in Prahovo consisted of 34 tents spread over an area of 50,000 square meters, in addition to the necessary barracks for administration offices, kitchen halls, wireless station, washrooms and the like. To facilitate the transportation of the settlers and their luggage, even a special railway platform had been built.

The local *Volksdeutsche* contributed largely to making both the Zemun and Prahovo camps as perfect as they were. Almost every young man worked there for a few days; the girls sewed clothes and assisted in the maintenance of the camps. The *Volksgruppe* contributed 55 wagonloads of wheat, 8 wagonloads of other foodstuffs, and money to be used to buy food. Furthermore, they served as intermediaries for the purchase of all other food.⁵⁹

The building of these transit camps and the voluntary self-mobilization for this purpose of a group of Yugoslav citizens of German origin obviously had the consent and approval of the highest government authorities in Yugoslavia. In a sense, these

⁵⁸ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 65.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 65.

camps constituted a kind of temporary 'state within a state.' Only their external protection was entrusted to special units of the Yugoslav police.⁶⁰ Youthful Yugoslavs wearing brassards of the German Labor Corps stood guard at the gates.⁶¹ The special permits required for entrance into the camps were issued by the German repatriation authorities and not by the Yugoslavs.⁶²

The first convoy of about 1,300 repatriates arrived in Zemun on 27 September, and further transports arrived at regular intervals. Ordinarily the repatriates stayed in the Zemun and Prahovo camps not more than two days, moving on from there to Hungary.

Although at this time Hungary was technically a neutral, its exceptionally friendly relations with Germany proved very useful to the latter. As early as 4 September, the official Hungarian news agency announced that Germany was sending relief trains to assist in the evacuation of the German minority from Bessarabia.⁶³

The evacuation of the 42,441 Germans from Northern Bukovina presented quite a different transportation problem. Northern Bukovina, although it had no common frontier with the Reich, was separated from the annexed Polish regions by only a comparatively narrow strip of Soviet eastern Galicia, which could be crossed by rail in a very short time. The Soviet authorities provided some 40 trains for this purpose. Frontier transit points through which the Bukovina *Volksdeutsche* were directed were established at Przemyśl and Olchowce-Nowy-Zagorz. At Sanok, situated 5 kilometers from the border, was a reception camp where health control and other formalities were handled.⁶⁴ The transfer from Northern Bukovina was carried out entirely by railway; no trucks were used. This meant, of course, that the

⁶⁰ *New York Times*, 26 September 1940.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 15 September 1940.

⁶² *Ibid.* 20 October 1940.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 5 September 1940.

⁶⁴ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 65.

Bukovina Germans were unable to take with them their livestock, which on the eve of the evacuation was considerable, including as it did 14,800 head of horses and horned cattle, 3,200 sheep and 15,700 pigs.⁶⁵

VII

The biological, social, and economic structure of the two groups of evacuees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was closely studied before their arrival in the Reich. As a group, the Bessarabians, who were mainly peasants, had a higher value to the Reich for the realization of its colonization policy. The following sets of figures illuminate the situation:⁶⁶

	<i>Bessarabia</i>	<i>Northern Bukovina</i>
Men	46,193	20,181
Women	47,335	22,260

The predominance of women over men, therefore, in the Northern Bukovina group was 2,079, while in the Bessarabian group it was only 1,142, a matter of some importance to the Reich.

In the matter of age distribution, the Bessarabian group again presented the more favorable picture:

	<i>Bessarabia</i>	<i>Northern Bukovina</i>
Under 14 years	31.7%	24.3%
Between 14 and 65 years	64.7	71.0
Over 65 years	3.6	4.7

Among the ten German minority groups evacuated by the Reich, Bessarabia held the fourth highest place in regard to the percentage of children, while Northern Bukovina held eighth place. The positions are exactly the reverse with regard to the percentage of old persons.

⁶⁵ *Neues Bauerntum*, November 1940, p. 561.

⁶⁶ *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1941, no. 7; Alfred Thoss, 'Das grosse Werk . . .' (cited above), p. 65, and 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen aus Bessarabien . . .' (cited above), pp. 166-7.

A comparison of the economic structure of the two groups shows that the Bessarabian groups had a sounder composition:

	<i>Bessarabia</i>	<i>Northern Bukovina</i>
Working persons	57.6%	44.2%
Persons with income	2.2	7.3
Married women having no profession . . .	6.2	16.3
Others without profession	34.0	32.2

The low percentage of married women having no profession in Bessarabia, which made the percentage of economically independent persons so much higher than in Northern Bukovina, may be attributed to the prevalent peasant status in which women were reckoned as working members of the household. The high percentage of other persons without profession among the Bessarabians was due to the great number of children under 14 years who had not entered economic life.

The difference in the occupational structure of the two groups was considerable:

	<i>Bessarabia</i>	<i>Northern Bukovina</i>
Agriculture, farming and forestry	81.7%	30.7%
Crafts and industry	12.9	48.4
Trade and transportation work	2.2	7.8
Administration, school personnel, medical and sanitary professions	1.8	11.0
Domestic professions	1.3	1.8
Other professions	0.1	0.3

As far as the percentage of persons occupied in farming and forestry was concerned, Bessarabia held third place among the repatriated German groups, while Northern Bukovina was next to the lowest. But Northern Bukovina, strongly industrialized as it was, contributed a very high proportion of persons engaged in crafts and industry; in this respect it was far ahead of all other repatriated groups. It held a high place, too, in the percentage

of persons employed in administration, and the teaching and medical professions. Bessarabia, on the other hand, was very poor in professional men in comparison with Bukovina:

	<i>Bessarabia</i>	<i>Northern Bukovina</i>
Lawyers.....	33	154
Doctors and dentists.....	39	39
Teachers.....	399	578
Clergy.....	31	156
	<hr/> 502	<hr/> 927

On the whole, Bessarabia with her peasantry and Northern Bukovina with her highly skilled craftsmen and industrial workers and strong intelligentsia complemented each other in many respects. By repatriating the two groups the Reich received a highly qualified and well-balanced mass of 135,000 persons of considerable value for the purposes of colonizing the annexed Polish provinces.

VIII

There are scant data available on the fate of the Germans repatriated from Bessarabia after their return to the Reich. A cable of 29 September 1940 to the *New York Times* from its correspondent in Galati stated that 'a large number of the Bessarabian emigrants will spend the winter in Southern Austria and be resettled in the spring.' All indications are that the majority of the repatriates did spend the winter as predicted. The repatriates from Northern Bukovina who had followed an entirely different route (Cernăuți-Przemysl-Krakow) were quartered in camps in Silesia.⁶⁷

Most of the repatriated Germans must have spent many months in assembly camps. By the end of 1940 only 30,000 Germans from Bessarabia and Bukovina had been settled in the incor-

⁶⁷ *Südostdeutsche Landpost*, 16 March 1941.

porated Polish provinces.⁶⁸ In the middle of March 1941, 48,000 Northern and Southern Bukovina Germans were still in Silesian transit camps.⁶⁹ By the end of that year, 10,038 repatriated from Bukovina and 29,211 from Bessarabia had been settled in the Warthegau.⁷⁰ According to the *Krakauer Zeitung* of 20 February 1942, most of the Germans from Bukovina and Bessarabia had been settled in Gau Danzig-West Prussia, while the *Danziger Vorposten* announced on 16 October 1943 that 8,642 families (some 43,000 persons) from Bessarabia had been installed in this Gau.

Reporting on the year 1941, the DUT promised that 'the settlement of the repatriates from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, at least, will be finished in the spring of 1942, while the colonization of repatriates from Southern Bukovina will be completed by the end of 1942.'⁷¹ There is no indication of the extent to which this pledge was fulfilled. The *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 4 January 1942 acknowledged that the Germans from Bessarabia and Bukovina, who arrived last, had a difficult time, since all the best farms and jobs had been taken by those who arrived before them, or were being reserved for front-line soldiers.

Official and semi-official Czech sources have consistently asserted that *Volksdeutsche* evacuated from Bessarabia and Bukovina were resettled not only in the incorporated Polish provinces but also in the German-controlled Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia, and in the German-annexed Sudetengau.⁷² The silence on this subject, however, on the part of the usually voluble German sources, as well as the lack of any specific data in the Czech

⁶⁸ *Das Reich*, January 1941.

⁶⁹ *Südostdeutsche Landpost*, 16 March 1941.

⁷⁰ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 11 January 1942.

⁷¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 4 April 1942.

⁷² *News Flashes from Czechoslovakia*, no. 60, 6 December 1940, and no. 62, 30 December 1940; Erdely, *Germany's First European Protectorate*, p. 239; 'Germanization in Czechoslovakia and Poland,' in *News Flashes from Czechoslovakia*, no. 95, 25 August 1941.

reports, indicates that there was no large-scale agricultural colonization of the Czech areas by Germans repatriated from abroad.

It is possible that the Czech reports refer to the many assembly camps established in the incorporated Czech areas as temporary quarters for the German resettlers. There is no doubt that tens of thousands of Germans from Bessarabia and Bukovina were stationed in such camps while awaiting resettlement and that a considerable number lived in them for many months, but there is a vast difference between residence in such camps, even for a protracted period, and actual colonization.

A similar misunderstanding seems to have occurred with reference to the alleged settlement of Bessarabian Germans in Alsace and Lorraine, along the Maginot Line.⁷³ Apparently their stay in these areas was also temporary.

Yugoslav sources speak of the colonization of Bessarabian Germans in the German-annexed northwestern part of Yugoslavia,⁷⁴ the area from which some vast numbers of Slovenes were removed to Old Serbia or sent to the Reich for forced labor. On 22 January 1943, the *Kölnische Zeitung* mentioned that Germans evacuated from Bessarabia and Bukovina had been settled in Lower Styria. There are no precise data on their number, which was probably not very large, or on places where they settled.

A number of the Bessarabian Germans, who were not considered sufficiently nationalistic to be trusted in the recently incorporated territories where they would be in contact with an overwhelming non-German majority, were settled in Central Germany. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of 6 March 1941 stated that 'not all Bessarabian Germans are sent to the East. Some of them remain in the Reich: their Germanism has been so watered down

⁷³ Lorraine, *La France Allemande*, pp. 205-6; Debré, 'L'Alsace-Lorraine depuis l'Armistice,' in *Bulletin Publié par Alsace et Lorraine Libres*, March 1942.

⁷⁴ Furlan, *Fighting Yugoslavia*, p. 19.

in the course of centuries that they are unfit to become colonists in these new parts of Germany.'

Thus it can be safely assumed that the overwhelming majority of the Germans evacuated from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were eventually settled in the incorporated Polish provinces. Small groups were directed to the Zamosc and Lublin districts in the Government General.⁷⁵ When Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were retaken from the Soviet Union by the Axis armies and reincorporated into Romania in July 1941, the question of a return of the evacuated Germans to these provinces was not raised by either Romania or the Reich.

⁷⁵ Polish Telegraphic Agency bulletin, 12 August 1942.

X

Transfer of the Black Sea Germans

I

PRIOR to the German retreat from the Soviet Union, the Reich had never considered the transfer of the *Volksdeutsche* groups from the invaded Soviet territories. On the contrary, so long as the German High Command believed that the territories could be held, special efforts were made to strengthen these folk groups and to organize their settlements as permanent German outposts. The sole exceptions were three small groups totaling 25,800 persons, who were transferred from the Soviet Union during 1942 and the first half of 1943.¹

The first of these were the 3,800 Germans, mainly city dwellers, who were evacuated from the Leningrad and Ingermanland areas, and from Shlüsselburg and Luga, between January and March 1942. Of this group, 507 families comprising more than 2,100 persons were selected for resettlement in the Lublin district of the Government General.²

In the period between January and July 1943, another group of 10,500 Germans were transferred from the area under the jurisdiction of the *Heeresgruppe-Mitte* and the White Russian Commissariat General. They were never resettled. After some months spent in transit camps in the Warthegau, they were drafted for labor service in the Reich.³ In February 1943, 11,500

¹ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 July 1944.

² According to the report of the DUT for 1942, the Lublin district also received those of the resettlers from Soviet Russia who were assigned for settlement in the Warthegau but could not be colonized there. See also *Völkischer Beobachter*, 4 April 1943; *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 April 1943; *Krakauer Zeitung*, 27 March 1942.

³ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 July 1944.

Germans were removed from the northern Caucasus, the Donbass, and the Kalmuck steppe. Most of them were resettled in the Government General,⁴ and the remainder presumably in the Warthegau.

The mass transfer of *Volksdeutsche* from the Soviet Union began only in the second half of 1943, after the position of the German armies in the occupied Soviet territories had become extremely perilous. The Germans had been forced to evacuate, one after the other, large areas of the northern Caucasus and of the southern Ukraine. These areas contained large and flourishing German settlements, concentrated mainly in the former Russian provinces of Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk), Kherson, and Tauria, around Krivoi-rog, Zaporozhe, Melitopol, Mariupol, and in the neighborhood of Taganrog and Rostov.

Most of these Germans were descendants of those settlers whom the Empress Catherine had called to Russia. For generations they had been engaged in turning the steppe into arable fields, and in the process they had achieved considerable prosperity. Their original land grant from the government of 1,819,000 acres had increased to 132,300,000 acres, making them considerably richer in land than the native population. The number of *Volksdeutsche* in the various districts and their land holdings, prior to the establishment of the Soviet regime, are indicated by the following figures: ⁵

	<i>Germans among the Local Population</i>	<i>German-owned Land</i>
Province of Ekaterinoslav . . .	9.0%	25.5%
Province of Tauria	6.9	38.0
District of Taganrog	3.5	22.0
District of Simferopol	9.2	77.8
District of Odessa	7.0	60.0

⁴ Ibid. 23 July 1944.

⁵ Verband Deutscher Vereine im Ausland, *Wir Deutschen in der Welt*, pp. 108-9.

By 1914, the number of German colonists in the Black Sea region had grown to roughly 600,000, spread over 1,077 localities, the majority of which were purely German.⁶ Under the Soviet regime, they suffered at first from the economic policy, which they strongly opposed, but they finally adapted themselves to the new order. Their number, however, decreased notably as a result of famine and of emigration to other parts of the Soviet Union and to other countries. The 1926 census reported 449,415 Germans in the Black Sea area, including the Crimea with 43,600 and the northern Caucasus with 94,400.⁷ At the start of World War II some of them were evacuated by the Soviet government, and German sources assert that when the German armies conquered Transnistria, the Crimea, the Don River region, and the northern Caucasus, only 250,000 Germans were to be found in these areas. Not more than 8,424 families, comprising 4,459 men, 11,637 women, and 12,734 children under 14 years, were left in the German colonies around Melitopol and Mariupol.⁸

II

The German-Romanian occupation of the conquered Soviet territory raised the German peasants found there to the status of representatives of the 'master race,' and they enjoyed a highly privileged position. Particularly conspicuous was the role played by the more than 130,000 *Volksdeutsche* in Romanian-annexed Transnistria, where they lived in 229 towns and communities, 120 of which had a German majority or were purely German.⁹

This short-lived bliss had its shadows. Since these peasants had been the foremost exponents of the German policy of ruthless

⁶ DNB broadcast, 4 February 1944.

⁷ *Vsesoyuznaia Perepis Naseleniya*, December 17, 1926. *Kratkiye Svodki*, iv; Carlo von Kugelchen, 'Die Russlanddeutschen,' in *Nation und Staat*, April 1939, p. 425.

⁸ *Breslauer Neueste Nachrichten*, 10 October 1943.

⁹ *Donauzeitung*, 13 December 1942.

oppression and exploitation of the local population, the retreat of the German armies made their further existence in the evacuated areas impossible. The vengeance of the embittered Russian and Ukrainian population would have meant their total extermination. The German High Command therefore ordered their wholesale removal, which began in August 1943 and was completed by the following July. DNB then announced: 'Approximately 350,000 people who, in the long run, would have been lost to the German community under the Bolshevik terror regime, have been saved from this fate, and will be brought to new and useful employment within the protecting Reich frontiers.'¹⁰ The evacuation of these 350,000 *Volksdeutsche*,¹¹ which did not include the three small groups mentioned above, took place in four installments.

Between October 1943 and March 1944, some 72,000 Germans were evacuated from the Ukraine. Among them were peasants from the German colonies in the Crimea and urban dwellers from Kherson, Nikolaev, Nikopol, Kiev, Kharkov, Zaporozhe, Krivoi-rog, Melitopol, and Mariupol. Most of these settlers were sent to the Warthegau.¹²

The second installment, which numbered some 73,000 Germans from the Black Sea regions and from the southern Ukraine on both sides of the Dnieper, were also transferred to the Warthegau, between August 1943 and May 1944.¹³

Some 44,600 *Volksdeutsche*, mainly rural dwellers, comprised

¹⁰ DNB broadcast, 13 July 1944.

¹¹ German sources on the number of evacuees are contradictory. An article by Willy Dismar, 'Der grosse Trek,' in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* of 1 August 1944, refers to 370,000 Germans 'saved from Bolshevism,' although in its effort to prove Soviet atrocities, the *Breslauer Neueste Nachrichten* of 10 October 1943 had asserted that only 250,000 Germans were found in the Black Sea area when the German armies occupied the region.

¹² *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 July 1944; *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1944 (Moscow dispatch).

¹³ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 July 1944.

the third group, which left Soviet East Wolhynia between October 1943 and May 1944.¹⁴ This group included both German colonists who had long been resident in this area and a number of Germans who had only recently been transferred to the region around Zhitomir. These Germans were sent first to Bialystock, but later moved on to the Warthegau.¹⁵

In the period from May to July 1944, 135,000 *Volksdeutsche* were evacuated from Transnistria, the area between the Dniester and the Bug. The transfer of this group was postponed until the latest possible date for two reasons: first, to prevent the advancing Soviet armies from gaining premature knowledge of the German plan of retreat, and second, to maintain production by the Transnistrian *Volksdeutsche* of the food for two army groups.

The order to begin the trek from Transnistria was given on 14 May,¹⁶ and two routes were designated. The northern trek, which had to traverse about 450 kilometers, was directed through Moldavia and the Carpathian Mountains into Transylvania and thence by rail to the Warthegau. This route was taken by 70,125 persons with 38,444 horses and 6,548 head of cattle. The shorter southern trek of about 230 kilometers, which led through the Dobruja along the south bank of the Danube into the Banat and from there by rail to the Warthegau, was taken by 38,022 persons with 12,224 horses and 5,516 head of cattle.¹⁷ The route taken by the remaining 25,000 to 27,000 resettlers has not been disclosed.

The transfer of the Germans from the southern area of the Soviet Union took place under extremely harsh conditions. The *Völkischer Beobachter* of 21 July 1944, in an article on the homeward trek of the Russian Germans, states:

The resettlement of German families from the Baltic, Wolhynia, Galicia, the area of Narew, Chelm, and Lublin-land, from Bes-

¹⁴ Ibid. 23 July 1944.

¹⁵ Ibid. 21 July 1944.

¹⁶ Ibid. 21 July 1944.

¹⁷ Disman, *op. cit.*

sarabia, Bukovina, Dobruja, and Bosnia, took place according to carefully worked out plans. But the evacuation of Germans from the Ostrau, from the Caucasus to the Dniester, had to be effected during a military retreat which taxed beyond capacity all means of communication and transport, bridges and ferries, railways and vessels, and which was compelled by events at the front constantly to vary its arrangements.

The transfer from Transnistria took place under especially difficult conditions and made heavy demands on men and materials. A great portion of this group covered as much as 1,000 or even 1,500 miles on their great trek from the southern Ukraine to Northwest Poland, which lasted from 12 to 14 weeks, much of it under the most adverse weather conditions. The following details were given by the German press: '1,800 persons, who were unable to travel on foot, were put on boats on the Danube at Galati. The city dwellers were put on trains in Transnistria, but some had to get off on the way because the bridges over the Dniester had already been blown up. Mothers, carrying their children, walked for many many miles.'¹⁸

Numerous transit camps were set up for the evacuees. In Poland, there was even a camp exclusively for pregnant women.¹⁹ In January 1944, 33,000 resettlers were billeted in 36 Styrian camps (at Fürstenfeld, Bierbaum, St. Michael, etc.).²⁰ In April, about 1,000 evacuees from the German colonies in the Ukraine, on the Volga, on the Black Sea, and in the Caucasus were reported in the camp of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* in Portschi in the Salzburg district.²¹ A large group of Transnistrian Germans were reported in a camp near Bistritsa in the region of Novisad.²²

¹⁸ DNB broadcast, 4 February 1944; *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 8 February 1944; Disman, op. cit.

¹⁹ *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 31 March 1944.

²⁰ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 12 July 1944.

²¹ *Salzburger Zeitung*, 20 April 1944.

²² *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 7 June 1944.

The immigrants reached the Reich in a sorry state. In Jarocin, near Poznan, a collection was taken for the purpose of supplying evacuees from the Black Sea area, who were billeted there, with clothes of which their need was great. Each evacuee was to receive, among other things, a strong pair of shoes.²³ It is not known how much of their personal belongings the evacuees managed to save. In any case, only a limited amount of money in *Reichskreditkassenscheine*, rubles, and karbovanets, which the resettlers had brought from the East, could be exchanged for German currency. Each person was allowed to receive up to 2,000 reichsmarks in cash, larger sums being credited to their accounts.²⁴

In a speech delivered on 24 January 1944, Gauleiter Arthur Greiser claimed that the Germans who were arriving at that moment from the Soviet Union 'were among the best elements in the German people' and that their attachment to the Reich had been strengthened rather than diminished during the war.²⁵ Other reports, however, present a different picture. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* of 3 August emphasized that the 'repatriated' Germans from Polish and Romanian territories had 'already succumbed to "Polonization" or were on the point of succumbing to this danger.' A report on settlers from the Soviet Union in a Salzburg camp admits that 'there are many among them who can no longer speak German, but now are learning the German language with enthusiasm in special language courses for adults, in the camp school for children, and in the camp kindergarten for the youngest, making considerable progress every day.'²⁶

Of the 350,000 evacuees, the great majority (285,000) were directed to the Warthegau for permanent colonization,²⁷ in the belief that the incorporated Polish provinces would be held in

²³ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 February 1944.

²⁴ *Aftontidningen*, 15 August 1944.

²⁵ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 24 January 1944.

²⁶ *Salzburger Zeitung*, 20 April 1944.

²⁷ DNB broadcast, 5 November 1944.

the face of the Russian advance. They were accommodated in large resettler camps²⁸ to await installation on farms from which Polish peasants were deported to the Government General. The final disposition of the remaining 130,000 resettled *Volksdeutsche* has not yet been disclosed. Presumably they were distributed in the other incorporated Polish provinces.

It is certain that in addition to the *Volksdeutsche* there was also an important return movement of Reich Germans who had been brought to the Soviet territory with the occupying German armies. Numerous reports speak of the Reich German 'carpet-baggers,' civilians and officials, who fled from or were evacuated from the Ukraine. Not only officials, employees, and specialists, but also 'thousands of German colonists lured to the Ukraine by the Führer's promises of prosperity and *Lebensraum*' were among the first to flee from the advancing Red Army.²⁹ It is necessary, however, to distinguish clearly between this group of Reich German newcomers, introduced after the German occupation, and the established Black Sea *Volksdeutsche*, 'Russians of German race,'³⁰ whose removal has been described above.

²⁸ *Tagespost*, 16 January 1944; DNB broadcast, 4 February 1944.

²⁹ *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1944 (Moscow dispatch).

³⁰ *Pester Lloyd*, 5 February 1944.

XI

German Transfer and Population Policy in Government General and in Soviet Wolhynia

I

THE Polish territory conquered by the German army in September 1939 was subdivided by a decree on 12 October of that year into two distinct parts, subsequently designated as the Government General and the incorporated provinces. The formulators of German policy in the 'new German East' maintained that this measure was to be interpreted not as an arbitrary anti-Polish act, but rather as an honest and well-considered attempt to solve, albeit radically, the centuries-old German-Polish conflict through a policy of 'delimitation of living spaces.' The Government General was destined 'to form within the framework of the Reich the "motherland of the Poles" [*Heimstätte der Polen*],'¹ while the incorporated area was to become a purely German living space. This theory found its clearest expression in a speech delivered by Governor Frank of the Government General at the opening of the Institute of German Labor in the East in Krakow on 21 April 1940:

The history of the last twenty years has shown that a permanent peace in the area of the former Polish state is possible only if an end be put once and for all to the struggle between nationalities in this area. This is the aim of the planned and orderly transfer of the German and Polish population into ethnographically self-contained settlement areas.

The deportation of Poles and the colonization of Germans repatriated from abroad and of those from the Reich was thus

¹ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 September 1940.

proclaimed a well-elaborated, constructive policy of 'isolation in space': both the Germans and the Poles had suffered from the inevitable friction attendant on their coexistence in a geographically common living space; therefore separation would redound to the benefit of all concerned.

In fulfilment of this policy, 1.5 million Poles were deported from the incorporated provinces to the Government General, their 'motherland,' which became a kind of reservation for the Polish nation. The German authorities were eager to prove at this time that they were in earnest about the second element of their pledge—the conversion of the Government General into a purely Polish living space through systematic transfer of the scattered German ethnic isles to the incorporated areas. The evacuation of some 30,000 Germans living in the easternmost part of the Government General—the Lublin-Chelm-Lubartów triangle—was proclaimed the first step in this direction.

This operation was unique in the whole system of transfers undertaken by the Reich before 1944. All transfers effected during the 1939-43 period dealt with German minorities living in an area under foreign sovereignty or belonging to the sphere of interest of a foreign power, and they were accomplished on the basis of interstate treaties. The Germans of the Lublin district, however, inhabited an area subject to the same German sovereignty as the incorporated area to which they were transferred. The whole procedure was in the nature of a domestic affair of the Reich, conceived and executed within territories under its sole control.

II

The German groups in the Lublin area had established themselves in this region relatively late—that is, after 1865.² In 1914 their number was estimated at 50,000.³ During World War I

² *Nation und Staat*, November 1940, p. 58.

³ *Warschauer Zeitung*, 16 April 1940.

many of them were mobilized and served in the Russian army at the Caucasus front; the rest shared the plight of the Wolhynian Germans and were deported to the interior of Russia in 1915, returning to their devastated homesteads only some three to five years later. German sources asserted that their existence under Polish sovereignty was far from happy. 'Polish robbery' reduced the land owned by Germans in the Lublin district from 148,000 to 84,000 acres, leaving an average of 15.37 acres per farm. German schools were practically non-existent.⁴

In choosing this group as the first to be transferred to the Warthegau, 'to co-operate there together with other repatriated Germans in the building up of a peasant province in the Warthe basin [*Bauernwartheland*],' ⁵ the action was conceived and carried out in the form of an exchange: the German peasants in the Lublin area were transferred to farms hitherto owned by Poles in the fourteen districts of the western, northwestern, and central Warthegau, and the Poles, in their turn, were transferred to the farms evacuated by the Germans.⁶ Neither group was asked whether it was willing to be transferred. There was no right of option secured by interstate treaty—not even as a formality. German co-nationals of the Lublin district were considered by the Reich as its subjects who had to obey instructions of the Führer; Polish Warthegau peasants destined to be replaced by the transferred Lublin Germans were simply deported from their farms as were hundreds of thousands of other Polish peasants in this area. The only distinction was that the other deported Poles were permitted to go to any part of the Government General and to settle wherever they found a place, while the Poles in

⁴ *Neues Bauerntum*, September 1940, pp. 301-2; Alfred Thoss, 'Umsiedlungen und Optionen im Rahmen der Neuordnung Europas,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, pp. 129-30.

⁵ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 September 1940.

⁶ 341 German families from the Lublin and Chelm areas were resettled in the Gau Danzig-West Prussia. (*Danziger Vorposten*, 16 October 1943.)

this group were obliged to occupy farms left by the evacuated Germans.

German sources put the number of Germans evacuated and resettled in this fashion at 30,116, but they are silent about the number of Poles exchanged for these Germans. It can hardly be assumed that there was any equality in number. To quote Dr. Kummer of the Reich Ministry of Agriculture, Polish farms for the most part 'did not correspond to German requirements,' and several Polish farms had to be joined together in order to provide an estate suitable for a German settler. It must therefore be assumed that the number of Polish peasants exchanged for the Lublin Germans was considerably higher than 30,116. Reliable figures are not available.

The exchange plan was conceived by the German authorities early in the spring of 1940; the transfer was not effected until September of the same year. In the meantime, basic preliminary work was done. The German authorities carried out detailed investigations with the object of determining the amount of land owned by the settlers, the value of their movable property and their holdings of livestock. Simultaneously, exact racial, biological, and health data were collected.⁷ In April 1940 the first group of some 9,000 families comprising about 25,000 persons registered for resettlement,⁸ and the selection of the Polish Warthegau farms to be assigned to them was also made during that spring. All necessary preparations were thus completed and the transfer operations started on 6 September.

The Reich Commissioner for Strengthening of Germanism in the East entrusted the immediate supervision of this resettlement activity to higher officers of the police and to SS Brigadeführer Jan Globocnik;⁹ they had at their disposal a resettlement squad of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (Office for Dealing with Those

⁷ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 September 1940.

⁸ *Warschauer Zeitung*, 9 April 1940.

⁹ Thoss, 'Umsiedlungen und Optionen . . .' (cited above), p. 130.

of German Race). The area to be evacuated was divided into 15 small districts, each of which was supervised by a local deputy, by his alternate, and by an appraiser representing the *Deutsche Ansiedlungs Gesellschaft* (German Colonization Association).

As a rule, the transfer was conducted in a very simple fashion. The German peasants drove with their carriages in a trek from their homes to the nearest railway station, and there set out for their new resettlement area by train. The Deutsche Ostbahn provided twelve complete and two reserve trains. When the resettlers arrived at their destination, they went again by trek from the station to the assigned villages and farms. The average duration of the transfer operation for each group was three to four days. Each member of the resettler family had an identification number. The head of the family had to wear his during the entire trip, and the same number appeared on the family luggage, the food parcels which they were given during the trip, on their carts, and on the assigned farm.

By the end of October, the entire operation was completed. The period chosen for the transfer—September, and after the harvest—caused no interruption of the normal course of agricultural activity. The exchanged farms were left without cultivation for only a very short time. In every case, enough cattle and farm equipment were left behind to enable the new occupants to resume at once the necessary procedures.¹⁰

The biological, economic and occupational structure of the group of German resettlers from the Lublin area made them particularly valuable to the Reich from the point of view of its colonization needs.¹¹ Their distribution in age groups is indicated by the following figures:

¹⁰ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 38-9; *Neues Bauerntum*, September 1940, pp. 301-2.

¹¹ *Neues Bauerntum*, September 1940, pp. 301-2; Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 38-9; *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 September 1940; 'Altersaufbau und Berufsgliederung der volksdeutschen Umsiedler aus Lettland, Estland, Wolhynien, Galizien, dem Narewgebiet und dem Osten des Generalgouvernements,' in *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1 January 1941, pp. 1-3.

Under 14 years.....	38.3%
Between 14 and 65 years.....	57.4
Over 65 years.....	4.3

Germans from the eastern Government General showed the highest percentage of children among all the ten transferred German minority groups.

The economic composition of the group was likewise healthy:

Working persons.....	55.6%
Persons with income.....	2.1
Married women having no profession.....	3.5
Others without profession.....	38.8

The percentage of economically independent persons among the Germans transferred from the Lublin area was extraordinarily high; in this respect, the group was inferior only to the Germans evacuated from Galicia.

With regard to occupational structure, the survey showed the following picture:

Agriculture, farming, and forestry.....	83.1%
Crafts and industry.....	8.8
Trade and transportation work.....	4.1
Administration.....	2.4
Domestic professions.....	1.6

In so far as the percentage of persons occupied in farming and forestry was concerned, Germans from the Lublin area held first place among the transplanted German groups—a factor of the greatest importance for the colonization policy in the incorporated Polish provinces.

III

As stated above, the transfer of the Germans from the Government General was originally considered by the highest representatives of the Reich in Poland as only the first step in a long-range program of systematic liquidation of German ethnic isles

in that area. Following a visit in August 1940 to the Radom district in Central Poland, where Germans had been settled for generations, Gauleiter Greiser of the Wartheland declared that 'everywhere the *Volksdeutsche* peasantry expressed to him the wish to be removed to the Reich.'¹² And in his officially recommended work, *Das Generalgouvernement*, Dr. Maximilian Freiherr du Prel stated flatly that although some 65,000 *Volksdeutsche* still live in the Government General west of the Vistula, they are to be transferred.¹³ At the beginning of 1941, one more exchange was planned—that of 6,000 Germans from the Warsaw district for a corresponding number of Polish peasants from the Warthegau.¹⁴

This trend, however, was soon reversed. The Reich apparently decided not only not to evacuate but to retain the existing German minority in the Government General and even to strengthen it by 'recovering' the Polonized Germans. From 1941 special attention was paid to the Zamosc county of the Lublin district from which 30,000 Germans had been evacuated only a few months before. The same Globocnik, who had conducted this evacuation, reported to a National Socialist meeting in Zamosc on 15 June on a 'surprising discovery, which was made during the work of resettlement'—the existence 'of still other people who were, racially speaking, Germans.' These people, 'while preserving completely the German type, racial characteristics, and religious confessions, had lost only the German language and . . . a conscious relation to Germanism.'¹⁵ This discovery had been followed by a feverish campaign for the 'regaining and re-Germanization' of these 'lost Germans,' a campaign conducted under the leadership of Globocnik himself. Globocnik had organized a systematic 'search for German blood' in the form of

¹² *Warschauer Zeitung*, 20 August 1940.

¹³ Du Prel, *Das Generalgouvernement*, p. 29.

¹⁴ Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlungen und Optionen . . .' (cited above), p. 130.

¹⁵ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 15 June 1941.

investigations not only of archives and church registers, but even of gravestones, and he announced proudly to his audience that 'already about 6,000 persons belonging to the German race have been discovered in this fashion.' He added that 'the daily arrival of further discoveries and new clues makes one able to infer that a far greater number are present.'

All these 'discoveries' clearly served an elaborate plan for the imminent German colonization of the Zamosé county. Globocnik announced frankly that 'here then shall arise within the Government General the first German cell of the modern eastern colonization, reawakened by this search to a pulsating German colonial life.'

And indeed, at the end of December 1942, the Polish government-in-exile announced the receipt of a mass of new evidence that 10,000 Polish peasants in the western section of the Government General (districts of Zamosc, Krasnystaw, Hrubieszów, Tomaszów, Pulawy, and Lublin) had been dispossessed of their farms and evacuated: able-bodied men were sent to the Reich or to eastern areas, where they were used, under guard, for local work, and the aged, sick, and physically weak were removed 'to unknown destinations.'¹⁶ This mass removal of Polish peasants from the Lublin, Zamosé, and neighboring areas was an essential factor in support of two distinct but complementary aims of Reich colonization policy in the Government General—to find room for newcomers and to enrich the Germans already on the spot.

In June 1941, Globocnik announced that 'this new German region of the Lublin district . . . shall encompass a larger territory' and shall become 'a purely German region of settlement.'¹⁷ Some time later he declared that because in the Zamosé area 'there are numerous *Volksdeutsche* and people of German origin, and because the soil is very fertile, it has been decided that, after

¹⁶ Overseas News Agency, 23 December 1942.

¹⁷ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 15 June 1941.

the area has been cleared [of Poles], numerous *Volksdeutsche* who have been evacuated from other parts, and *Reichsdeutsche* ex-servicemen will be settled there.' With regard to both categories, the emphasis is on the future. The only immediate usufructuaries of the 'cleared' land seem to have been the local 'rediscovered *Volksdeutsche* and people of German origin,' whose property had to be considerably enlarged. Each German was promised four or five Polish farms 'because singly they are considered too small for Germans,' according to Globocnik.¹⁸

At the end of 1942 came the turn of German groups evacuated from other countries. The report of the DUT for 1942 announced that 'the Lublin district is destined for resettlers from Bulgaria, Serbia, Bessarabia, for a certain part of the Balts and for that part of resettlers from Soviet Russia who were assigned to settlement in the Warthegau but could not be colonized there.'¹⁹

All these groups were comparatively small. Only 2,156 Germans had been evacuated from Bulgaria, and from Old Serbia only 1,925. The overwhelming majority of resettlers from Bessarabia and the Baltic countries had been colonized in the incorporated Polish provinces or in Lower Styria (Bessarabian Germans), and out of 3,800 Germans from the Leningrad area, only 2,104 (500 families) were chosen for resettlement in the Lublin district. In addition, some 20,000 Germans evacuated between October and December 1942 from Bosnia, on the basis of an accord with the Ustashi government of Croatia, were destined for resettlement in the Lublin area.²⁰ Thus, from 1942, the Government General appears to have been the only German-held region where the resettlement of the transferred German folk groups was continued.

¹⁸ Quoted from the *Survey of Central and Eastern Europe*, February 1943.

¹⁹ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 7 April 1943; *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 April 1943.

²⁰ *Wiesci Polskie*, 17 April 1943.

The situation altered drastically in the latter half of 1944. The relentless advance of the Soviet armies caused the precipitate and wholesale evacuation of the local and transferred *Volksdeutsche* from the Lublin area. By the end of July the first refugees had arrived in Krakow.²¹ On 3 August, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* reported that several transports of German families from the Lublin area had reached the Gau Osthannover and, like the repatriates from the Soviet Union, were largely employed in agriculture.

IV

By provision of the Polish-Soviet Riga Treaty of 18 March 1921, the former Russian province of Wolhynia had been divided into two parts, the western part going to Poland, the eastern remaining within the Soviet boundary. In 1925, the latter was converted into a 'Wolhynian region,' with a population of 690,537, of which 50,400 or 7.3 per cent were Germans.²² A German author in 1940 counted 'over 50,000 Germans in the Russian Wolhynia,' but added cautiously that 'of late they have suffered greatly as a result of resettlement and other measures taken by the Russian government so that at present it is difficult to say anything about their economic—let alone national—life.'²³

The German settlers in this region were not included in the Soviet-German agreement of 3 November 1939 on the evacuation of Germans from Polish Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew area. The Soviet government considered them as their own 'autochthonous' citizens of German ethnic nationality and would not even hear of their evacuation. Moreover, at this time, the Reich government obviously had no intention of promoting such a resettlement.

²¹ Moscow radio, 31 July 1944.

²² *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopaedia*, vol. 13, p. 31.

²³ O. H. Isberth, 'Volksdeutsches Bauerntum in Europa,' in *Neues Bauern-tum*, September 1940, pp. 315-16.

Following the German conquest of the Polish province of Wolhynia and the Soviet 'Wolhynian region,' both sections were organized into a single administrative unit.²⁴ The Reich commissar for the Ukraine was entrusted with administration of this province.²⁵

The sector of the Wolhynian region around the Soviet town of Zhitomir was selected by the German authorities as a colonization area to which were transferred German resettlers from other parts of the conquered Soviet territory. In 1942, some 4,000 *Volksdeutsche* from the Emiltshin rayon in the Pripet Marshes were resettled in the Zhitomir region in order to strengthen the existing German settlements there.²⁶ Other German groups were brought from the districts around 'Neutomischl' northeast of Kiev. By the autumn of 1943, they constituted in an area of 30 square kilometers a *Volksdeutsche* settlement district, Hegewald, comprising 32 villages with a population of some 10,000.²⁷

This transfer and colonization venture had a very short life. Simultaneously with the evacuation of all the German settlers from the Soviet Ukraine, caused by the general retreat of the German armies in the winter of 1943-4, there were evacuated also the 44,600 German 'autochthonous' peasants and new settlers from the Soviet Wolhynia, particularly from the Zhitomir area. They were directed mainly to the Warthegau.²⁸

²⁴ *Polish Fortnightly Review*, no. 30, 15 October 1941.

²⁵ *Krakivski Visti*, 8 October 1941.

²⁶ *Deutsche Ukraine Zeitung*, 23 October 1942.

²⁷ *Donauzeitung*, 28 November 1943.

²⁸ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 23 July 1944.

XII

Transfer and Elimination of the Germans from Romania

I

ON 9 October 1940, about a month after the conclusion of the German-Soviet agreement on the transfer of Germans from Soviet-incorporated Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, a mixed German-Romanian commission met in Bucharest to discuss the removal of German minorities from Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja. Thirteen days later an agreement was signed by the representatives of the Reich and of the Antonescu government.¹

When the *Bukarester Tageblatt*, mouthpiece of the German Legation in Bucharest, announced on 8 October that these groups of German residents were to be evacuated, the *New York Times* correspondent in Romania pointed out that no explanation was given for the removal of Germans from provinces that were still a part of Romania.² And it was indeed difficult to find an explanation for the immediate evacuation of a minority group which at that time not only enjoyed equality with Romanians, but actually held a privileged position and had no reason to be apprehensive for the future. In *The Attack from Within*, F. Elwin Jones wrote that directly after the conclusion of the German-Romanian treaty of 23 March 1939, months before the outbreak of the war, 'the German minority newspapers began to

¹ *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, November 1940, p. 561.

² *New York Times*, 9 October 1940.

write a little as if they had annexed the Rumanians, not at all as if they were still the subjects of Rumania.' ³

German military successes made the German minority in Romania even bolder. On 18 August 1940, Dr. Wolfram Brückner, leader of the folk group in the Banat, declared: 'The time of mere tolerance has passed for us. One cannot seek the support and protection of the German Reich, as the states of the Southeast do, and simultaneously withhold the rights of the German folk group. . . We shall not tolerate such proceedings. We, the Germans, are an indissoluble community in the entire world, thanks to our great Führer.' ⁴

The official Romanian newspaper, *Monitorul Oficial*, on 21 November, published a decree making the 'German folk group in Romania a legal person according to public law' with the right to frame, in agreement with the government, 'the laws concerning its own particular life and aiming at the preservation and strengthening of the German folk group.' ⁵ At the same time, the Ministry of Economics assured the Germans that 'Romanian citizens of German nationality will be placed on the same footing as the racial Romanians with regard to rules and laws governing the Romanian manpower in industry.' ⁶

The most radiant prospects were opening for the German minority in Romania. In political as well as in economic and cultural spheres, it became the most privileged of all the ethnic minority groups in the country. And even as the evacuation agreement was in the making, an article by Dr. Arnold Weingärtner in the October 1940 issue of *Nation und Staat* jubilantly stated that the new order in Romania 'means a quite new existence for the German folk group. It will put an end to the

³ Jones, *The Attack from Within*, pp. 113-14.

⁴ *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 32.

⁵ *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, December 1940, p. 903.

⁶ *Nation und Staat*, December 1940, p. 97.

steadily progressive narrowing of its vital space. There will be no further necessity for a permanent struggle. The development of Germandom will proceed in a much more normal way.' ⁷

II

Despite this roseate outlook, the Reich nevertheless decided to evacuate the German population of Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja. With regard to the former area, a possible explanation may be found in an article by Dr. Wilhelm Arz, who stated that the incorporation of the northern part of Bukovina by the Soviet Union had resulted in the complete isolation of the German minority in Southern Bukovina. Thus, 'the solution upon which the Führer decided for the Germans of Bukovina in connection with the new organization of Southeastern Europe must be considered a liberation from the fruitless struggling and striving which would in the final analysis have little chance for an enduring success.' ⁸

The Southern Bukovina Germans answered the call of the Führer with the same unanimity as had their brethren in the Sovietized northern half of this province. The disparity between the political and the economic regimes governing these two areas had no effect on the reactions of their German populations. In Soviet Northern Bukovina, 44,371 *Volksdeutsche* registered for evacuation; in Romanian Southern Bukovina, 55,250 opted for transfer to the Reich.⁹ The census figures on ethnic nationality were notoriously biased. On the other hand, many persons 'dis-

⁷ Arnold Weingärtner, 'Ende und Anfang in Rumanien,' in *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 9.

⁸ Wilhelm Arz, 'Das Deutschtum des Buchenlandes,' in *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 22.

⁹ 'Altersaufbau und Berufsgliederung der Umsiedler aus dem Nord- und Südbuchenland, Bessarabien und der Dobrudscha,' in *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1941, no. 7, pp. 150-52.

covered' their Germandom when the opportunity for transfer occurred.¹⁰

The Germans of Dobruja comprised the only German group that manifested a desire for mass emigration even before the inauguration of the Reich's repatriation policy. Stemming mainly from old German colonies in Bessarabia, they had migrated to Dobruja in the decade between 1830 and 1840. About three-quarters of the Dobruja Germans were peasants; their land holdings amounted to 67,283 acres.¹¹ The birth rate, however, was exceptionally high, and the younger generation found itself in desperate straits. Under the Romanian law, only racial Romanians could legally buy land in Dobruja. Thus the Germans, as well as other non-Romanian ethnic groups, were deprived of the chance to enlarge their holdings and thus, indirectly, to sustain themselves.

Another factor fostering interest in emigration was the traditional roving nature of the Dobruja Germans. A German-Dobruja leader, Adam Kühn, stated in the early 1870's: 'I know our people. When they are once obsessed by a longing for travel, there is no remedy for it. And even if they have to sacrifice their last shirt in order to go away, they will give up the shirt and go.'¹²

This longing for travel seized the Dobruja Germans once again in 1938. *Nation und Staat* reported that at that time an 'emigration fever' was raging there. A plan for a mass exodus to the Sudeten area, then a Czechoslovak province, gained much popularity among the Dobruja German minority, as did other 'adventurous projects.'¹³ Leaders of the German minority in Romania

¹⁰ The Romanian census of 1941 registered only 3,734 Germans in Southern Bukovina (2,329 in the towns and 1,405 in the villages), 1.1 per cent of the total population of the province. (*Communicari Statistice*, 15 January 1945, p. 3, and 31 January 1945.)

¹¹ *Neues Bauerntum*, December 1940, pp. 421-34.

¹² Bahr, *Deutsches Schicksal im Südosten*, pp. 224-5.

¹³ 'Auswanderungsfieber unter den Dobrudjadeutschen,' in *Nation und Staat*, May 1939, p. 539.

took energetic steps to check this trend, but interest in the idea was revived by Hitler's Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939. According to the *New York Times* Bucharest correspondent, about 10,000 Germans in Dobruja signified their intention to emigrate to Germany.¹⁴ At that time, however, such intentions did not coincide with the views of the Reich, and the Dobruja Germans were forced to wait until the autumn of 1940.

The Craiova treaty of 7 September 1940 between Romania and Bulgaria ceded Southern Dobruja (where there were practically no Germans) to Bulgaria, while the northern part of the province remained in Romania. This partition of Dobruja provided a motive for the evacuation of the Germans. In line with its repatriation policy, the Reich invited them to 'return home,' and the 14,500 Dobruja Germans voted unanimously to be transferred to Greater Germany. The Romanian census of 1941 registered only 1,693 Germans (1,327 in the towns and 366 in the villages) in Northern Dobruja (0.3 per cent of the population.)¹⁵

An additional protocol to the basic German-Romanian treaty extended the right of option to those *Volksdeutsche* in Romania whose actual residence was outside of Southern Bukovina and Dobruja, but who were subject to the jurisdiction of these territories.

III

The organization of the transfer from Bukovina was entrusted to an *Umsiedlungskommando* under the direction of SS-Oberführer Sickmeyer. Actual operations began on 15 November and were completed by 13 December, only 28 days later.¹⁶ The evacuation was effected entirely by railroad *via* Hungary, with 111 trains put at the disposal of the evacuees. The majority of the

¹⁴ *New York Times*, 13 November 1939.

¹⁵ *Comunicari Statistice*, 15 January 1945, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 65-6.

trains left from Gurahumora,¹⁷ and four trainloads a day moved over the Dej-Cluj-Oradea-Budapest-Vienna-Leipzig line. The journey was made in German railway cars; each train had its own staff of physicians and nurses as well as special facilities for caring for children.¹⁸

The evacuees from Dobruja had a choice of traveling by train or by wagon. Those going by train were permitted to take with them only their belongings within the limits of the transport capacity of the Romanian railroad network. Therefore many resettlers preferred to travel by cart or wagon, a procedure which involved no such restrictions. They went first to the Danube port of Cernă-Vodă and from there by boat to the transit camps established at Zemun and Prahovo in Yugoslavia.

Ships of the Donau Dampfschiffahrt Gesellschaft made 27 trips from Cernă-Vodă to these camps, covering 48,220 kilometers. On leaving the camps the transferees were taken to the Reich *via* Hungary in special trains provided by the Reichsbahn and by the Yugoslav state railway. Those from Prahovo went *via* Jesenice to Villach (in the Austrian province of Carinthia) and those from Prahovo were directed *via* Maribor (Marburg) to Graz (in the Austrian province of Styria).¹⁹

The German-Romanian treaty of 22 October differed widely from the German-Soviet agreement of 5 September 1940 with regard to the settlement of the property interests of the Germans to be transferred. Of paramount importance was the clause stating that the value of land left by the evacuees was to be included among the property listed and subject to indemnification.²⁰ An official Romanian publication stated that these 'possessions were transferred to the patrimony of the [Romanian] state under the obligation to reimburse the Reich in amounts equal to

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 65-6.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, 18 November 1940.

¹⁹ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 66; *Zeitschrift für Binnenschifffahrt*, April 1941, p. 55.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 39.

their value.' A special mixed Romanian-German commission was appointed for the purpose of fixing this financial obligation of the Romanian state. Liquidation of German property in Dobruja was completed by September 1943 and resulted in the evaluation of the 64,680 acres previously owned by Germans at 628,921,442 lei (\$86,352,000, at the prewar rate of exchange.)²¹

There were no restrictions whatever on the movable property that could be taken out of the country. If the resettlers could not take their possessions with them, they were granted the right to remove them at any time within twelve months after the signing of the treaty. Only space limitations restricted the amount of personal property that could be taken on the trains; there was no limit set on the amount of goods if the trip was made by trek. All livestock attached to the farm could be taken along. The same provisions governing property transfer applied to the persons covered by the protocol appended to the basic treaty.

The supervision of the property transfer was assigned to a special mixed commission, on which the Romanian counterpart of the German chief of the *Aussiedlungskommando* was the chief representative of the Romanian government. The commission met at Gurahumora; three regional delegates had their headquarters at Rădăuți and Gurahumora for the Bukovina operations, and at Constantza for the Dobruja proceedings.²²

The following figures indicate the age and occupational distribution of the two transferred groups:²³

	<i>Southern Bukovina</i>	<i>Northern Dobruja</i>
Under 14.....	27.7%	37.1%
Between 14 and 65.....	67.5	60.2
Over 65.....	4.8	2.7

²¹ *Trei Ani de Guvernare*, p. 152.

²² Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, p. 39.

²³ 'Altersaufbau und Berufsgliederung der Umsiedler . . .' (cited above), pp. 150-52.

	<i>Southern Bukovina</i>	<i>Northern Dobruja</i>
Agriculture and forestry	43.7%	79.9%
Handicrafts and industry	46.2	14.2
Trade and communications	3.7	2.7
Liberal professions	3.5	1.2
Domestic service	2.5	1.8

As in the case of their brethren from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the overwhelming majority of the transferred Germans from Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja were resettled in the German-incorporated provinces of Western Poland (Warthegau and Danzig-West Prussia). There was also some mention of the settlement of *Volksdeutsche* from Southern Bukovina in the German-incorporated Yugoslav district of Lower Styria,²⁴ but there is no precise data on their number, which was probably not very large, or on the place where they were settled. Certain small groups were sent to the Zamosc and Lublin district of the Polish Government General.²⁵

IV

Less than 10 per cent of the Germans who lived in what was left of Romania after it had been forced to cede a great part of its territory to the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria were invited to resettle in the Reich. The 248,878 Germans living in Southern Transylvania and the Bergland and the 221,762 in the Banat—all regions that were retained by Romania—were asked to stay.²⁶

Herman Jekeli, who directed the evacuation of the German folk group from Romania, in an appeal to the Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja Germans, expressed his firm belief that if

²⁴ *Tagespost*, 25 November 1942; *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 January 1943.

²⁵ Polish Telegraphic Agency bulletin, 12 August 1943.

²⁶ *Communicari Statistice*, 15 January 1945, p. 3.

these German groups had been required by the Führer to stay in Romania, they would have fulfilled their duty faithfully. 'You are going home to the Reich,' he continued. 'We Germans in the Old Romania, in the Banat and Transylvania remain here. You in the Reich and we here will fulfill our duty as Germans in a way in which Germans alone are capable. You as resettlers in the German East and we as an advanced folk group in Romania.'²⁷

Therein lies the clue to the reason for leaving the majority of Germans in Romania. The Reich evidently considered the strengthening of the German outposts in Southeastern Europe of much greater importance than the total transfer of the Romanian Germans to the incorporated Polish provinces. Bernard Newman, one of the most penetrating and courageous students of European affairs, expressed the well-founded belief that it was 'Hitler's deliberate policy . . . to leave a large German population in the rump Romania to justify a subsequent claim as German territory.'²⁸ He also recalled the fact that at one period it had been suggested that a portion of Transylvania be carved out to form a new German state. *Donaustaat* had already been chosen as its name. According to *Függetlenség* this project was fully discussed in the fall of 1942 at a meeting of the Hungarian parliamentary party. The government was asked for an explanation of the rumors concerning a 'second German state' which was to include Hungarian territory. Bela Lucacz, Minister without Portfolio and chairman of the party, in his reply on behalf of the government, was unable to give any satisfactory explanation.²⁹

Political and military events of the late summer of 1944 brought about a sudden collapse of these ambitious German plans. Romania went over to the Allied camp and declared war

²⁷ *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 6 November 1940.

²⁸ Newman, *The New Europe*, pp. 282, 462-3.

²⁹ J. A. Tigram, 'A Second German State,' in *Central European Observer*, 16 October 1942, p. 334.

on the Reich. The new anti-German government and the native Romanian population were intensely resentful of the privileged status of the German folk group that had been forced on the country during the period in which she was a Reich satellite. The Germans in Romania had even considered that they owed allegiance not to the state in which they were living but to the Führer of the German Reich. Some 73,000 *Volksdeutsche*, therefore, instead of serving with the Romanian army, had volunteered for the German Waffen SS and had left for the front by July 1943.³⁰ Contrary to the general rule that nationals of a state who join a foreign army lose their citizenship, a Romanian-German agreement based on the Romanian law of 16 January 1939 safeguarded for these volunteers their claim to Romanian citizenship.³¹ The new Romanian government adopted a quite different attitude toward the German minority. It decided to deprive of Romanian citizenship all *Volksdeutsche* who belonged to any civilian, military, or paramilitary German organization, or who had held any privileged position during the period of German ascendancy.³² It also decided to dissolve the German folk group in Romania.³³

The situation of the Germans became especially precarious in Transylvania, where the local Romanian population was openly hostile. Soviet armies crossed into this province with the co-operation of Romanian troops, and the Germans found themselves face to face with the 'Bolshevist menace.'

In these circumstances, the Reich had to resort to the already established means of wholesale evacuation. Early in September, General Johannes Friessner, commander of the German troops in Transylvania, sent a request to the Bucharest government to arrange the evacuation of the German folk group. The govern-

³⁰ German Home Service broadcast, 18 November 1943.

³¹ *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 28 July 1943.

³² Romanian European Service broadcast, 5 October 1944.

³³ Turkish Home Service broadcast, 29 September 1944.

ment agreed to make their co-operation conditional upon the good treatment of the Romanian population under Hungarian rule in Northern Transylvania.³⁴ This condition was not fulfilled, and the evacuation was therefore effected without Romanian aid.

On 29 September, Transocean reported that the whole German minority group in Transylvania, numbering about 250,000³⁵ persons and living in an area roughly outlined by the cities of Sibiu, Brashov, and Cluj, had been evacuated, rural and urban population alike, and that they had been directed to Hungary, whence they were to be sent to the Reich proper. The Slovak Home Service reported on 14 October that the German folk group in the Romanian Banat, numbering some 237,000, was also involved in this evacuation.

This information proved to be misleading. The retreating German army was unable to evacuate both its military contingents and the local German civilian population as well. The majority of the latter were trapped by the swift advance of the Soviet and Romanian troops and remained in their homes. At first, apparently, they were terrified that revenge would be taken upon them by the Romanians and by the Soviet troops for their arrogant and treacherous behavior during the pro-German Antonescu regime. But when nothing whatever happened to them in the course of the first few months after the withdrawal of the German armies, they gradually recovered confidence and went about their business in precisely the same way as before. American personnel of the Allied Armistice Commission were told on their trip through Transylvania and the Romanian Banat in December 1944 that, in Brashov, pro-Hitler meetings were openly held in the houses of leading Germans, and that plots to help the German war effort in one way or another were continually being re-

³⁴ Romanian radio broadcast, 7 September 1944.

³⁵ The census of 3 November 1940 registered 188,643 Germans in Southern Transylvania. Since that time, numerous refugees had settled in the province.

ported. According to the Mayor of Timisoara, 95 per cent of the Banat Germans were still violently pro-Nazi.

An entirely new situation was created in January 1945 when the Soviet head of the Allied Armistice Commission, General Sergei Vinogradov, ordered the mobilization of all able-bodied members of the German folk group in Romania, including men between the ages of 17 and 45 and women between 18 and 30, with the exception of mothers of infants less than a year old.³⁶ In a discussion with General Schuyler of the United States army, who objected to this measure, General Vinogradov declared that, despite their claim to Romanian citizenship, most of the *Volksdeutsche* in Romania were actually Germans who had aided the German armies in Romania and were now sabotaging the war effort; therefore the Soviet Union intended to deport some of them, particularly the skilled laborers, to rebuild Stalingrad and other Russian cities wantonly destroyed by their German 'cousins.' Protests by the Romanian government headed by General Nicolai Radescu, and by Romanian leftist groups, who objected to deportation on a racial rather than a political basis, were unavailing.

A total of 93,538 *Volksdeutsche* were included in the mobilization lists. Of these, 69,332 (36,590 men and 32,742 women) were sent to the Soviet Union. According to reliable sources, evacuees were allowed as much as 500 pounds of baggage and were generally well treated; they were also to be permitted to correspond with their families and were promised that they would be sent back to Romania when no longer needed. Many Germans are reported to have gone into hiding to escape deportation.

The Soviet project is tantamount to almost total liquidation of the German minority in Romania. Taking into account the 73,000 *Volksdeutsche*, who joined the Wehrmacht and left Romania in 1943, and the unspecified but certainly considerable

³⁶ Romanian Home Service broadcast, 8 February 1945.

number of those who succeeded in evacuating themselves with the German troops in September 1944, the deportation of some 70,000 to the Soviet Union will virtually exhaust all the adult German population of Romania.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ A brief and inadequate presentation of the Soviet deportation policy toward the Germans in Romania is given by Pertinax in the *New York Times*, 25 January 1945.

XIII

Transfer of the Germans from Dismembered Yugoslavia

I

GERMANS formed the largest minority group in Yugoslavia, numbering, according to the census of 1921, 505,799 or about 4.3 per cent of the total population. They were distributed throughout the country, with the greatest concentration in the Banat, Bachka, and Baranya, where they comprised 23.3 per cent of the population. In Croatia and Slavonia, they constituted 4.5 per cent of the entire population, in Slovenia, 3.3 per cent, and in Bosnia and Hercegovina, 0.9 per cent. In Serbia proper, Montenegro, and Dalmatia, their number was insignificant.¹ Official Yugoslav data put the number of Germans in Yugoslavia in 1931 at 499,326 (3.9 per cent of the population),² while German sources claimed 700,000.³

In October 1939, when Hitler announced the Reich's intention of repatriating the German minorities scattered throughout Southeastern Europe, *Donau*, the organ of the German Catholics in Yugoslavia, asked 'authoritative Berlin circles' whether the transfer scheme included the Yugoslav German minority. The reply was in the affirmative.⁴

¹ *Resultats préliminaires du recensement de la population dans le royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovenes du 31 janvier 1921.*

² *La Yougoslavie d'Aujourd'hui*, p. 8.

³ *Grenzboten*, 19 February 1943. The 1931 census has not been published in its entirety, primarily because some of its data were not accurate, especially with regard to the ethnic nationality of the population.

⁴ André Tamas, 'Le recent aspect de la question Yougoslave,' in *Voix des Peuples*, 15 January 1940.

According to the Hungarian newspaper, *Réggeli Újság*, of 24 October 1939, the leaders of the German folk group in Yugoslavia showed no inclination to be transferred to the Reich. This assertion is supported by a pronouncement in *Volksruf*, mouth-piece of the German minority: 'We have lived here for over two hundred years. We work in this country, we build, and the soil bears our mark. We are deeply rooted in this country; we intend to remain here forever, because Yugoslavia has become our fatherland.'⁵ The peasants, tradesmen, and industrialists were also strongly opposed to the idea of being removed from their homes; less secure economic groups—laborers, small artisans, and persons without stable occupation—were, on the contrary, rather favorably disposed to the suggestion. In an effort to calm the Yugoslav *Volksdeutsche*, the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, central organ of the German *Kulturbund*, explained in its issue of 11 October 1939 that the Reich leaders considered the transfer scheme applicable only to those splinters of German nationality that were unable to maintain their ethnic and economic existence, and that the *Volksgruppe* of Yugoslavia was not in this situation.

Yugoslav government circles, on the other hand, clearly demonstrated their satisfaction with the prospect of getting rid of this numerous and troublesome minority. The semi-official *Politika* of 26 October 1939 stated that 'Yugoslavia is also interested in the solution of the question of the repatriation of German minorities,' and suggested a form of exchange of this minority in Yugoslavia for the 150,000 Yugoslavs living in the German-annexed Austrian provinces of Carinthia and Burgenland. The *Hrvatski Dnevnik* also spoke of Hitler's transfer plan as a 'beautiful idea which deserves every attention.'⁶

The very eagerness of the Yugoslav leaders, coupled with the manifest reluctance of the greater part of the German folk group concerned, induced the Reich to abandon the idea of transferring

⁵ Quoted in *Obzor*, 10 October 1939.

⁶ Quoted in *L'Echo de Belgrade*, 26 October 1939.

the German minority in Yugoslavia until 1941, when the dismemberment of that country led to the transfer of smaller German groups from Serbia proper, from the Italian-held Gottschee area, and from Croatia.

II

The majority of the 500,000 to 700,000 Germans in Yugoslavia lived in Croatia and in the areas taken over by Hungary, Germany, and Italy. In the rump state of Serbia proper with its 3.5 million inhabitants, only about 200,000 Germans remained; by far the greater part (130,000) of this German folk group was concentrated in the Serbian section of the Banat, where they had been granted an extraordinarily privileged status.⁷ The transfer of this valuable outpost of Germandom in the Balkans was never contemplated by the Reich.

In December 1941, a few months after Yugoslavia's dismemberment, 1,925 Germans were transferred from Serbia proper to the Reich,⁸ for eventual resettlement in the Polish Government General.⁹ The bulk of the German folk group in Serbia remained unaffected by this limited transfer operation.

In the Banat the Germans constituted 20 per cent of the population and owned 29.5 per cent of all the arable land, an amount equal to that held by the 300,000 Serbs. In addition, German farmers cultivated another 10 per cent of the soil, composed of land confiscated from the Hungarian owners of large estates in accordance with the Yugoslav Agrarian Law. German participation in the vineyard cultivation and the wine trade, both of considerable importance for the Banat, was even greater. The Germans owned 55 per cent of the vineyards, while Serbian ownership was only 23 per cent. Moreover, 60 per cent of the brick-yards and 65 per cent of the mills were in German hands, as well

⁷ *Grenzbote*, 19 February 1943.

⁸ *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1943, no. 10, p. 344.

⁹ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 April 1944.

as approximately 70 per cent of the whole agricultural-processing industry.¹⁰

When, in September 1943, the news began to spread that Soviet troops were nearing the Serbian Banat, 80 to 90 per cent of the German folk group tried to leave in the wake of the retreating German army. According to reliable information, however, only about 20 per cent succeeded in getting away. The rest were rounded up by the Partisans and put into special labor and detention camps. Their entire property was confiscated. Subsequently, Soviet military authorities began to ship all Banat *Volksdeutsche* between 16 to 60 years of age to the Soviet Union for compulsory labor. In the town of Bela Crkva alone some 700 houses formerly inhabited by Germans were empty by the end of 1944. The Serbian population is reported to have welcomed the forced removal of the German folk group with enthusiasm, and to anticipate its total disappearance from the Banat.

There are indications that similar developments occurred in other parts of Yugoslavia. Several reports state that as early as November 1944 Germans were fleeing their villages in Syrmia and the Voivodina, many of which have been German for several hundred years. In most cases, the departure was voluntary, prompted by the fear of Yugoslav revenge after the war, but even when German families preferred to risk Yugoslav wrath rather than give up ancestral homesteads, German military authorities forced them to depart. In December 1944, the District National Liberation Committee of Syrmia issued an order that no private person was to touch vacated *Volksdeutsche* property, which was to be managed by special subcommittees; it announced also that in the distribution of this land, priority would be given to the families that had suffered under the Germans and needed shelter, livestock, and agricultural implements.

According to recent reports, able-bodied males among the

¹⁰ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 29 March 1944; Nachrichten- und Pressedienst, 12 May 1944.

Volksdeutsche who remained in the provinces of Voivodina, Bachka, and Baranya were being sent to Soviet Russia for forced labor. It is believed that Marshal Tito came to an agreement with the Soviet highest authorities, whereby not only German war prisoners but Yugoslav *Volksdeutsche* as well should be sent to Soviet Russia for work. Diplomatic information which reached Washington by the middle of April 1945 placed the number of Germans removed from Yugoslavia at 100,000.¹¹ Yugoslav Partisans have long since announced that they would permanently banish the local Germans, who made themselves intensely hated by the population because of their cruel behavior during the German occupation.

III

After the conquest of Yugoslavia in May 1941, the Axis powers divided her territory into eight distinct parts. Italy received the Dalmatian coast, in addition to the town of Ljubljana (Laibach) and the surrounding territory (formerly the Yugoslav province of Drava); the population of this area totaled some 707,135 persons, including 19,079 Germans concentrated mainly in the so-called 'Gottschee [Kochevje] German linguistic isle.'

In 1930, this German settlement celebrated its 600th anniversary.¹² The Gottschee Germans had fully preserved their national identity and their specific variant of the *Mittelhochdeutsch* dialect; they had maintained close relations with other German settlements and with the Reich, and had stubbornly defended their right to have schools of their own and instruction in German.¹³ The members of this community felt deeply rooted, and when the suggestion of a mass transfer of German minorities from Southeastern Europe was first launched by Hitler in October

¹¹ *Evening Star*, 16 April 1945.

¹² *Jubiläums-Festbuch der Gottschee 600-Jahrfeier*; Hauffen, *Die deutsche Sprachinsel Gottschee*.

¹³ Schneefuss, *Deutschtum in Süd-Ost Europa*, pp. 125-6.

1939, the *Gottscheer Zeitung* categorically stated that the transfer did not represent an actual problem for them. 'We have decided to live here in the same way we have lived for 600 years, on this soil we have rendered fertile by our blood and sweat.'¹⁴

This extremely nationalistic and aggressive German minority was something of an embarrassment to the new Italian masters, who were determined to Italianize the newly acquired territory. To this end, some 30,000 Slovenes were deported from Italian-occupied parts of Slovenia, and about 50,000 persons were banished from Dalmatia.¹⁵ The Fascist government openly announced its intention of settling Italian colonists in the former Yugoslav areas,¹⁶ but the Gottschee Germans presented a serious obstacle to the realization of this project. Situated as they were at the new German-Italian frontier, they could too easily become a source of conflict between the allies. To avert this danger, the two Axis powers resorted to the already tested expedient of population transfer.

Following the pattern of the 1939 agreement on the transfer of the German minority from the South Tyrol, the Reich and Italy, in the fall of 1941, concluded an accord providing for the resettlement of the Gottschee Germans. They were summoned to register for transfer to the Reich, and, according to the Yugoslav Information Center in New York, they responded willingly to the invitation. About 13,500 persons opted for resettlement in the Reich and were evacuated in 1942.¹⁷

All real estate left by the transferred Gottschee Germans became the property of Emona, a government-controlled corporation which announced that it would sell this property to new Italian settlers.¹⁸ Yugoslav sources indicate, however, that the

¹⁴ Quoted in Tamas, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Furlan, *Fighting Yugoslavia*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Royal Yugoslav Information Center, *Atrocities and Transfer of Population in Occupied Yugoslavia*.

¹⁷ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 4 April 1943.

¹⁸ *Slovenec*, 4 April 1943.

Italians never succeeded in colonizing the occupied areas. Only Italian public officials poured into the country.¹⁹

The evacuated Gottschee Germans were resettled in the German-incorporated part of the former Yugoslav Slovenia, which included Lower Styria and Upper Carniola and had a population of 850,000 Slovenes and 5,375 Germans. Following the German occupation of this area, some 120,000 Slovenes were deported or fled, some to Serbia proper, some to Germany, and some to the Italian-held Ljubljana areas. From the strategically important districts of Bresice and Krško, situated only twenty miles from the German-Croatian and German-Italian frontiers, some 17,000 persons were expelled between 24 October and 17 November 1941. Further deportations followed.²⁰

The deportees were replaced in part by the Gottschee 'repatriates.' The new settlers were given large farms, three former homesteads being combined to make one new German farm comprising 37 acres of tilled soil, a forest, and a vineyard.²¹ A few thousand Germans transferred from the South Tyrol, Bukovina, and Bessarabia joined the Gottschee Germans in Lower Styria. By January 1943, the resettlement work was completed and the new settlers were proclaimed 'a new living wall on the southeast frontier of the Reich.'²² Some of the Gottschee resettlers were directed to the former Austrian province of Carinthia, which had been incorporated by the Reich in 1938. The *Kärntner Zeitung* of 4 February 1943 urged the established population to facilitate as far as possible the 'settling down of these peasants . . . who left their homes for the sake of the Reich.'

¹⁹ Furlan, *op. cit.* p. 19.

²⁰ Communication of the Royal Yugoslav Information Center, 5 December 1941.

²¹ Furlan, *op. cit.* p. 19.

²² *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22 January 1943.

IV

As a result of the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, the 'Independent State of Croatia' inherited a fairly large German minority of some 190,000 persons, composed mainly of closely knit, numerically strong communities in Syrmia and Slavonia, and isolated groups in Croatia proper, Bosnia, and Hercegovina. Since the new Croatian state was virtually a vassal of the Reich, the German folk group was accorded a highly privileged status. The laws of 21 June and 30 October 1941 were 'a guarantee of cultural and economic progress, and brought about smooth collaboration in building up the young state.'²³

There was thus no apparent reason or motive for transferring the whole or even part of the German minority in Croatia. As the well-informed Italian *Relazioni Internazionali* put it: '... with the stabilization of political, social and military collaboration between the Croat state and the German folk group, relations have been excellent, the Germans seeing that a peaceful existence was thus assured to them.'²⁴ There was no threat of bolshevism or sovietization, as in the Baltic countries and the Soviet-annexed Polish and Romanian territories. There was no necessity to oblige an ally, as in the case of the transfer of the German minorities from the Italian South Tyrol and the Gottschee area. Nevertheless, on 6 October 1942, the Reich concluded with the Croatian Ustashi government an agreement providing for the transfer of some 10 to 14 per cent of the German minority in Croatia.

Subject to the transfer were almost all the isolated German settlements in Bosnia and southwestern Croatia, an area in which no extensive German colonization had taken place in the past. German settlers had arrived there only relatively recently, after

²³ Nachrichten- und Pressedienst, 23 February 1943.

²⁴ *Relazioni Internazionali*, 31 October 1942.

the Dual Monarchy had occupied Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1878; most of them had come during the thirty years prior to World War I. Scattered in small groups among an overwhelming Croat majority and lacking permanent and close contact with the bulk of the German folk group concentrated in Syrmia and Slavonia, these 'splinters of the German nation' were considered by the Reich not strong or sound enough, economically or ethnically, to preserve their national existence. Furthermore, attacks by Partisans were endangering these isolated German settlements.²⁵

The evacuation scheme was supposed to affect some 26,000 Germans.²⁶ It included all German settlements in Bosnia and Hercegovina, with the exception of four big villages (Adolfstadt, Windhorst, Troselje, and Brčko),²⁷ and the Germans in Croatia proper, concentrated for the most part in the Zagreb district. The total number of Germans in Bosnia and Hercegovina was estimated at approximately 19,000 (11,000 in villages and 8,000 in towns);²⁸ those in Croatia proper numbered about 10,000. Several hundred Germans in that part of Dalmatia included in the Croat state were also affected. The Germans settled in the valleys of the Drina, the Bosna, and Vrbas rivers were engaged in agriculture, while those in the centers of Sarajevo, Mostar, and Travnik were mainly occupied in the local industries.²⁹

By the terms of the 6 October agreement the transfer was to be purely voluntary; the Germans affected had the free choice of registering for repatriation to the Reich or of remaining in Croatia.³⁰ Even persons in active Croat military service were

²⁵ Sattler, *Die deutsche Volksgruppe in unabhängigen Staat Kroatien*, p. 66.

²⁶ *Relazioni Internazionali*, 31 October 1942.

²⁷ *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 4 October 1942.

²⁸ Schneefuss, *Deutschtum in Süd-Ost Europa*, p. 139.

²⁹ *Relazioni Internazionali*, 31 October 1942.

³⁰ Bosnian Germans wishing to be included in the transfer had to register with the mixed Croat-German repatriation commission at Slavonian Brod.

allowed to register. The head of the family was to decide for the whole family, but children over 18 had the right to opt independently.³¹ The leader of the folk group, Branimir Altgayer, however, warned his co-nationals that 'Germans who remain will eventually be deprived of the care of the folk group leadership,' and that in territories whence Germans are removed all German organizations, schools, and other institutions would be abandoned and dissolved.³²

In these circumstances, it is no wonder that, according to a Transocean report, 'practically the entire peasant population took advantage of the [transfer] opportunity and its example was followed by the vast majority of German urban dwellers.' Another Transocean report stated that the request to settle in the Reich came from 90 per cent of the Germans in the cities and from 100 per cent of those in the rural districts south of the Sava River.³³ Only old people were reported to have stayed. Nevertheless, the number of Germans who registered for the transfer did not exceed 20,000, although 26,000 were eligible under the original repatriation scheme.³⁴ Many did choose to stay, and as late as June 1944 the *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien* mentioned 'Bosnia's German peasants who are at war against the murder and terror of the Communist band . . . and have the same rights in all vital questions as the natives. . . They will remain in the future also a solid bastion of German customs in Southeastern Europe.'³⁵

No travel expenses were incurred by the emigrants. The repatriates were allowed three weeks to complete their preparations for departure. They were then assembled at a temporary camp at Basanski Brod and were transported in large groups to

³¹ *Nova Hrvatska*, 7 October 1942.

³² *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 4 October 1942.

³³ Transocean broadcast, 21 and 25 November 1942.

³⁴ *Hrvatski Narod*, 15 October 1942.

³⁵ *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 26 June 1944.

those areas of the Reich in which they were to be resettled.³⁶

Under the terms of the agreement, those who opted for resettlement had the right to take with them, free of customs duty, all their movable goods and cash in amounts not exceeding 2,000 kuna (\$50) per person. They were guaranteed compensation for the real property they left behind. Pensioners were to receive equivalent benefit payments from the Reich. The evacuees were, however, asked to adjust, in so far as possible, all claims, debts, and obligations before their transfer.³⁷

Registration of the optants began immediately after the announcement of the conclusion of the accord. The entire transfer operation, which was assigned to the supervision of SS units, was to be completed by April 1943. Progress was hampered considerably by the activity of the Partisans, who killed many of the *Volksdeutsche*.³⁸ Nevertheless, by November 1942, the greater part of the repatriates had already arrived at the temporary settlement camp at Zgierz near Lodz.³⁹ By the end of December their number had reached 20,000. A great town of tents was constructed to shelter their 40,000 pieces of luggage, which had been transported by 36 goods trains of 20 trucks each. Even church bells, church organs, and clocks had been brought along.⁴⁰

The resettlement area to which the transferred Croat Germans were assigned was the Lublin district of the Polish Government General,⁴¹ which, since the end of 1942, had become the main destination of various smaller repatriated German folk groups. Actual resettlement was scheduled for the spring of 1943. Precise information on the practical results of this resettlement during

³⁶ Transocean broadcast, 25 November 1942.

³⁷ *Nova Hrvatska*, 7 October 1942; DNB broadcast, 11 November 1942.

³⁸ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 9 February 1943.

³⁹ DNB broadcast, 11 November 1942.

⁴⁰ *Marburger Zeitung*, 30 December 1942; *Svenska Dagbladet*, 5 May 1944.

⁴¹ *Wiesci Polskie*, 9 April 1943.

its first year is lacking. By the middle of 1944, German armies had to evacuate the Lublin area, and the Croat Germans settled there were also evacuated. Their relocation in the Reich was not disclosed.

The bulk of the German minority remained unaffected by the repatriation agreement of 6 October. Following the transfer operation described above, the German folk group in Croatia numbered some 170,000 persons,⁴² who were to 'fulfil their historical mission' in the place of their long residence and who sent 'their best wishes to the departing folk comrades.'⁴³

⁴² *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 23 November 1942.

⁴³ *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 4 October 1942.

XIV

Transfer of the Germans from Bulgaria

THE census of 1920 counted 2,455 Germans in Bulgaria.¹ Six years later 4,112 persons declared themselves of German ethnic nationality, while the number of German-speaking Bulgarian nationals reached 5,110. Of these ethnic Germans, 2,985 lived in towns, the largest single colony of 1,808 being concentrated in Sofia; 1,127 were villagers.²

In December 1941, 856 Germans living in Old Bulgaria were repatriated to the Reich.³ Another 500 were transferred in 1942.⁴ A considerable number, however, stayed on in Sofia until 1944, when Allied air raids precipitated their evacuation. 'Acting on the advice of the German Minister Beckerle,' the first party of German evacuees from Sofia, mainly women and children, arrived in Romania on 17 January 1944. It was disclosed that some of the party would stay in Transylvania, and that others would return to Germany.⁵

On 22 January 1943 an agreement was reached between the Reich and the Bulgarian government concerning the repatriation of 'Bulgarian citizens of German descent' from Bulgarian-annexed Macedonia and western Thrace. A royal decree published in the Bulgarian official gazette on 20 February stipulated that Germans leaving the country under the provisions of this agreement would lose Bulgarian citizenship on crossing the Bul-

¹ Eugenie Singer, 'Die Minderheiten in Bulgaria,' in *Nation und Staat*, March 1930, p. 365.

² *Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums*, p. 651.

³ *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1943, no. 10, p. 344.

⁴ Transocean broadcast, 30 April 1943.

⁵ Magyar Tavislati Iroda (Hungarian Telegraphic Agency), 18 January 1944.

garian frontier and would thus be released from all obligations toward the Bulgarian state. By April 1943 some 800 Germans had left Bulgaria under the terms of this accord.

The evacuees were permitted to take with them all their personal movable property, including money, bonds, foodstuffs, seeds, goods, and cattle. The adjustment of their claims to the value of their immovable property was left to a mixed Bulgarian-German commission.⁶ By a decree of the Bulgarian Parliament of 22 July, the Bulgarian Agricultural Co-operative Bank was given the exclusive right to buy the property of the German emigrants. The Ministry of Agriculture was entrusted with the management of the property until it was sold or distributed to Bulgarian peasants.⁷ On 12 December 1943, the Bulgarian Parliament ratified the agreement on the judicial settlement of the question of property belonging to persons of German origin transferred from Bulgaria.⁸

The resettlement area selected for the three groups of Bulgarian Germans, totaling 2,156 persons, was the Lublin district of the Polish Government General.⁹

⁶ Transocean broadcast, 3 and 20 February, 13 April 1943.

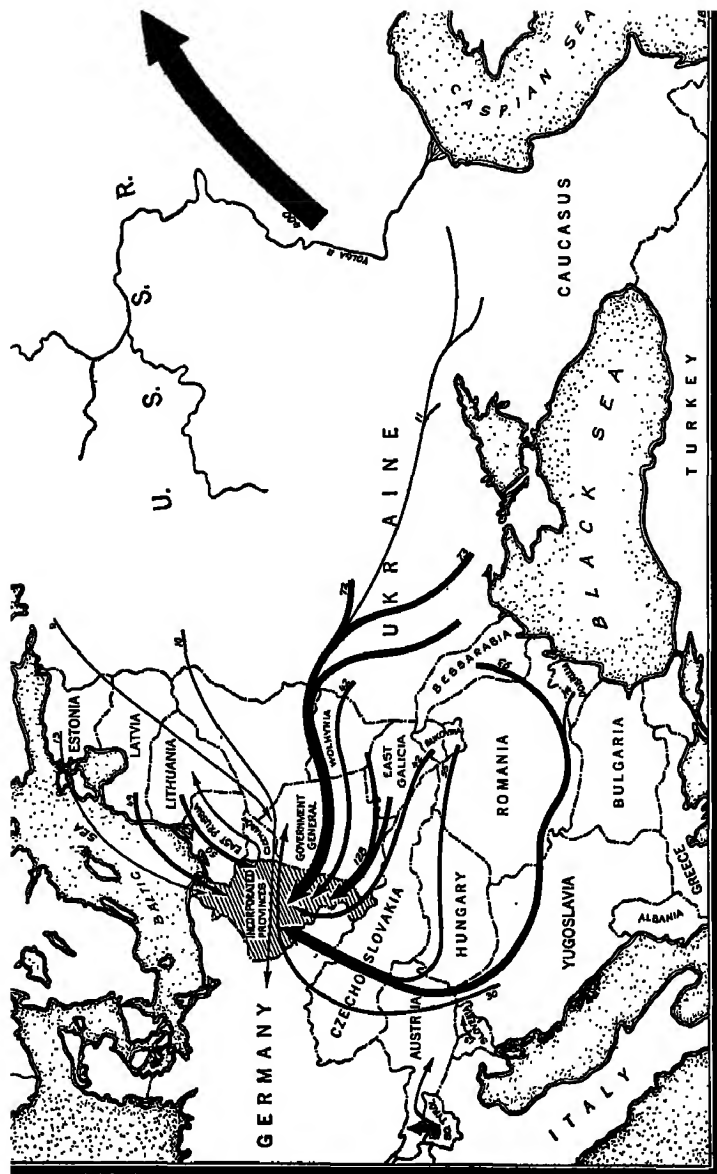
⁷ *Dnes*, 23 July 1943.

⁸ Sofia radio, 3 December 1943.

⁹ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 April 1943.

PART III

GERMAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM



TRANSFER OF GERMAN MINORITIES, 1939-45 (Figures given in thousands)

XV

The Territory of Resettlement

I

ELEVEN German minority groups, totaling about 500,000 persons, from Estonia, Latvia, Wolhynia, Galicia, the Narew area, Bessarabia, Northern and Southern Bukovina, Northern Dobruja, Lithuania, and the Lublin and Chelm districts of the Government General, were transferred from their homelands during the period between October 1939 and March 1941. It was the intention of the Reich, from the very inception of its transfer policy, to settle these 'repatriated' groups in that part of Polish territory that was conquered by the German armies in September 1939 and remained under German control after Poland's partition between the Reich and the Soviet Union. There are indications that some members of the above-mentioned groups were resettled elsewhere, but the only noteworthy colonization on a large scale occurred in the conquered Polish territory, and it is here that one must look for the most complete picture of Reich theories on resettlement and their implementation.

This territory, comprising an area of 73,676 square miles and a population of some 22,250,000 was divided by the Reich into two parts, known as the Government General and the incorporated provinces.¹ The former, with an area of some 37,320 square miles and a population estimated at 11,485,000, was created as a separate German-controlled territory by a decree of 12 October 1939 and called *Generalgouvernement der besetzten pol-*

¹ An area of some 225 square miles was transferred to Slovakia on 2 October 1939.

nischen Gebiete (Government General of the occupied Polish areas) or simply *Generalgouvernement Polen*. On 18 August 1940, the name was changed to *Generalgouvernement*.

The incorporated provinces covered an area of 36,117 square miles with a population of some 10,740,000, and comprised 23.7 per cent of the Polish state of 1939 and 30.4 per cent of its population. Included in this territory were two distinct sections, which differed widely in their history, composition, and character. One was composed of the western Polish provinces of Pomorze, Posnania, and Upper Silesia, which had been turned over to Poland after World War I. These covered 22,390 square miles and had a population of 5,519,000. The second section comprised the Polish districts of Wloclawek, Plock, Kalisz, Lodz, Suwalki, Sosnowiec, Bielsk, Biala, Dabrowa Gornicza, Żywiec, Wadowice, and Cieszyn, which had never belonged to the Reich. The area of these twelve districts was some 13,720 square miles and the population about 5,220,000.²

This latter section of the incorporated provinces included territories that were formerly Russian, Austrian, or Czech and thus had no historical background of Polish-German relations or of German colonization. Pomorze, Posnania, and Silesia, on the contrary, had belonged alternately to Poland, to Germany, and to Poland again, and to a certain extent, they reflected in the ethnic composition of their population the effects of alternating German and Polish colonization and administrative measures. A brief recapitulation of these shifting pressures is essential for the understanding of the background and evolution of the resettlement project carried out in these provinces between 1939 and 1944.

Pomorze is a Slavonic country. It was seized by the Teutonic order in 1309, recovered by Poland in 1466 and held until 1772, when it was taken by Prussia. At approximately the same time,

² *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland, September 1939-June 1941*, pp. 14-15.

Prussia annexed Posnania. Upper Silesia formed part of the Austrian Empire from 1335 to 1745, and was then reunited with the Prussian province of Silesia.³

The colonization of the Polish areas that fell to Prussia was begun by Frederick the Great, who settled Brandenburg peasants there. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Prussian policy toward the former Polish provinces was relatively conciliatory, but in about 1830, the settlement of subsidized German colonists was renewed. Following the creation of the German Empire in 1871, Bismarck developed a deliberate anti-Polish policy on a large scale. To accelerate the effectuation of this policy, the ill-famed *Ansiedlungs-Kommission* (Colonizing Commission) was established by the law of 26 April 1886 for the purpose of buying up Polish land for German colonists, and was provided with 100 million marks. In 1894, a subsidized *Ostmarkenverein* (Society of the Eastern Marches) was created for the promotion of German colonization in the East. The funds at the disposal of the *Ansiedlungs-Kommission* were considerably increased, and a special fund was set aside for a campaign to undermine the Polish middle class in the towns. Bismarck's most zealous successor, Prince von Bülow, brought new legislative means into play—a bill in 1904 forbidding Poles to erect any buildings on land they acquired, and one in 1908 empowering the *Ansiedlungs-Kommission* to confiscate Polish real estate. Substantial financial resources were devoted to the support of Prussia's anti-Polish policy: from 1886 until 1914, Germany spent 1.3 billion gold marks in an effort to oust Polish elements from Posnania and Pomorze, and to replace them by German colonists.⁴

The actual achievements of this ruthless and well-financed program, pursued over three decades, were very slight in proportion to the effort employed. The Polish population countered

³ Martel, *The Eastern Frontiers of Germany*, p. 131.

⁴ Wassilewski, *Nationalities in Pomerania*, p. 31.

the German moves by forming co-operative credit organizations, in which both the peasants and the urban middle class shared prominently, and in this way the Poles soon succeeded in buying more land than they lost. Efforts to increase the German population were not much more successful. A National Socialist author acknowledged in 1940 that the *Ansiedlungs-Kommission*, after thirty years of activity, had settled only about 145,000 Germans in Posnania and West Prussia, whereas 'twice that number had yielded to the prevailing "pull to the West," to the Rhine and Westphalia areas, where higher wages were paid.'⁵ Another National Socialist student of German colonization policy in the East also admitted that 'the political results of this colonization were purely negative . . . the Poles achieved more than the Germans . . . instead of being crushed, they won about 100,000 hectares [247,100 acres] of land. Because of their high birth rate, they consistently forced the Germans into a defensive position.'⁶ Thus, despite 145 years of German rule and the systematic colonization program, the population of Posnania, Pomorze, and of a great part of Silesia remained predominantly Polish.

II

The Treaty of Versailles obliged Germany to cede to the newly created Polish republic most of the provinces of Posnania and West Prussia, with a population (excluding Danzig) that was two-thirds Polish. After conducting a plebiscite in industrial Upper Silesia, the Council of the League of Nations decided to leave Germany more than half the people and land, but to give Poland most of the economic resources.

Germany never accepted the loss of these provinces and openly proclaimed her irredentist intentions. The German government and German political literature charged the Polish re-

⁵ Lange, *Ostland kehrt heim*, p. 53.

⁶ Zoch, *Neuordnung im Osten*, p. 79.

public with the forcible expulsion of the overwhelming majority of the Germans living in the ceded provinces of Posnania and West Prussia and with the systematic expropriation of the German landowning class. A summary of these accusations was given on the eve of World War II by F. W. von Oertzen, who asserted that during the first ten years of Polish mastery the number of Germans in the provinces of Posnania and West Prussia was reduced from 1.2 million to some 350,000, the German rural population losing 55 per cent, and urban groups, 85 per cent; he claimed further that 1,235,000 acres of German-owned land became Polish.⁷ Von Oertzen and other German publicists attributed this tremendous decrease to the deliberate de-Germanization policy of the Polish government.

The repeated complaints made to Geneva by the Germans that the Polish authorities were using the agrarian reforms of 15 July 1920 as a means of depriving German landowners of their holdings were undoubtedly well founded. Between 60 and 70 per cent of all the land parceled in Posnania and Pomorze belonged to Germans, yet no German farmer received any of the parceled land.⁸ Nevertheless, these practices of the Polish authorities, censurable as they were, did not result in any considerable emigration of the German rural population because, for the most part, they affected only a small group of large landowners. Of the 247,100 acres of German-owned land scheduled to be parceled in the Polish Corridor, 172,970 acres belonged to only 80 landowners.⁹ German complaints against the parceling of their estates in Poland bore the same stamp as the laments of the expropriated Baltic barons in Latvia and Estonia.

If the Poles had been successful in their attempts to evict without compensation German small tenant farmers, who with the aid of the German government had colonized Prussian Poland

⁷ Oertzen, *Das ist Polen*, p. 211.

⁸ Ballerstedt, *Gegenwartsfragen der ländlichen Siedlung in Posen und Pomerellen*, pp. 11 ff.

⁹ Turley, *Le conflit de demain: Berlin, Varsovie, Danzig*, pp. 130-31.

and held the land under special contracts from the Prussian government, a mass emigration of German peasants would have resulted. But the Reich appealed for redress on this score to the Council of the League of Nations, and the Hague Permanent Court of International Justice handed down an 'advisory opinion' to the effect that Poland must respect the private rights of her German inhabitants.¹⁰

German charges of persecution elicited indignant denials from the Poles, who flatly asserted that the mass flight of the German inhabitants from the Polish provinces began much earlier than the inception of Polish control in January 1920. They claimed that of the more than 300,000 Germans who left Pomorze during the period between the end of World War I and 1931, 195,604 departed before January 1920.¹¹

Polish sources claimed also that of the 0.5 million Germans who admittedly left Poland after 1920, the great majority did so voluntarily, and that not more than 30,000 German settlers or optants who refused to leave after having voted for Reich citizenship were expelled.¹² This Polish contention is supported by several German authors. Dr. H. Schütze agrees that 'even though many thousands of Germans undoubtedly have been compelled to emigrate against their will since 1918, for the most part, aside from officials, the uprooted elements emigrated voluntarily.'¹³ Walter Peters of the Grudziadz educational council goes even further, stating on the basis of his long first-hand knowledge that four-fifths of the German emigres left the country of their own volition.¹⁴ This mass migration took place

¹⁰ *World Court Reports*, vol. 1, p. 218 (Advisory Opinion no. 6, 10 September 1923).

¹¹ Paprocki, ed., *Minority Affairs and Poland*, p. 121.

¹² Smogorzewski, *Poland, Germany and the Corridor*, pp. 32-3.

¹³ H. Schütze, 'Das Posner Land,' in *Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift in Polen*, Heft 1-6, pp. 262-5.

¹⁴ Peters, 'Zur Ausweisung der Optanten aus Polen,' in *Allgemeine Rundschau*, 29 August 1925, quoted by Kasimiera Jezowa, *Die Bevölkerungs- und Wirtschaftsverhältnisse im westlichen Polen*, p. 210.

mainly among the urban population, which was not so organically connected with the country as were the rural folk. The emigrants were principally public officials, schoolteachers, members of the liberal professions, and workmen exclusive of skilled workers and specialists; representatives of these German occupational groups disappeared almost entirely from the towns of the western Polish provinces. German industrial and commercial enterprises in the provinces to a great extent passed into Polish hands, and the German merchant class was greatly diminished. The German artisan class, on the other hand, maintained its status relatively well.¹⁵

Following the mass migration, the German minority in the three western provinces of Poland (Pomorze, Posnania, and Silesia) numbered, according to the Polish census of 1931, about 375,000, that is, 8 per cent of the total population in these parts. The Germans contested these figures on the grounds that the census criterion of the mother tongue was misleading. They claimed that in mixed areas many persons speaking both German and Polish were likely, for political reasons, to tell the census taker that their mother tongue was Polish. Thus German sources asserted that there were a million Germans in Poland, not 741,000 as stated by the census.¹⁶ Inasmuch as the German protests are mainly concerned with that third of the German minority scattered throughout Poland, they have little bearing on the picture in the western provinces. In the entire area there was not a single county where the Germans were in a majority. Of the sixty-nine counties involved, there were only three where the German element accounted for more than 25 per cent of the population. Nearly three-quarters of the Germans left were concentrated in rural districts and were settled for the most part on medium-sized farm holdings of less than 123 acres each. A con-

¹⁵ Paprocki, *op. cit.* p. 120.

¹⁶ Buell, *Poland*, p. 245.

siderable number of Germans, however, owned larger farms and country estates.¹⁷

During the few weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of World War II, the German government and press passionately accused Poland of cruelly persecuting the German minority and of precipitating the mass flight of the *Volksdeutsche* to the Reich. The press spoke with indignation of 76,000 German refugees allegedly escaped from Poland to Germany, but when the *Gazeta Polska* correspondent in Berlin asked to be shown the refugee camps housing these refugees, he received no answer.¹⁸

Hitler himself, in an interview on 22 August with the British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, spoke of '100,000 refugees from Poland.'¹⁹ Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador to Poland, made inquiries in order to check the truth of this allegation, and reported to Viscount Halifax, British Foreign Affairs Secretary, that this German campaign was a 'gross distortion and exaggeration of the facts.'²⁰ After the outbreak of hostilities, official German sources charged the Polish government with responsibility for the plight of '58,000 dead and missing' members of the German minority in Poland during the first days of the German-Polish war. German authorities in the incorporated Polish provinces later reiterated these tales of 'Polish atrocities' in order to provide some justification for their policy of ruthless deportations and expropriation of the Poles in these areas.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 122-5.

¹⁸ Telegram of Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador to Poland, to Viscount Halifax, British Foreign Affairs Secretary, of 23 August 1939. See British Foreign Office, *The British War Blue Book*, miscellaneous no. 9 (1939), p. 121.

¹⁹ Telegram of Sir Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador to Poland, to Viscount Halifax, of 23 August 1939. See British Foreign Office, op. cit. p. 128.

²⁰ British Foreign Office, op. cit. p. 121.

²¹ German Library of Information, *Polish Acts of Atrocity against the German Minority in Poland*, pp. 11, 77, 19, 86.

III

After the military defeat and dismemberment of the Polish state, the Reich inaugurated an administrative reorganization of the incorporated Polish areas in order to create the necessary framework for its new colonization policy.

A decree dated 8 October 1939²² established the Reichsgau Posen, comprising Posnania and the adjacent territory of Central Poland as far as the Vistula on the northeast. Subsequently renamed Reichsgau Wartheland by a decree of 29 January 1940,²³ this district included the regencies of Inowroclaw (Hohensalza), Poznan (Posen), and Kalisz. The 8 October decree also created the Reichsgau West Prussia composed of Pomorze, the former Free City of Danzig, and adjacent German counties. By a decree of 2 November 1939,²⁴ it was renamed Reichsgau Danzig-West Prussia. The Katowice district of Polish Silesia was attached to the German province of Silesia by the 8 October decree. In January 1941, this great province was divided in two parts: Reichsgau Lower Silesia, composed of old Lower Silesia and the old German districts of Breslau and Liegnitz, and Reichsgau Upper Silesia, which included the former German Oppeln district, Polish Upper Silesia, the adjacent districts taken from the province of Kielce (Sosnowiec, Bedzin, Dabrowa Gornicza), and the border districts of the province of Krakow (Chrzanow, Jaworzno, Trzebinia, Oswiecim, Biala, Zywiec, and Wadowice). By the 8 October decree the district of Ciechanów in the northern part of Central Poland was renamed Zischenau and incorporated with the Reichsgau East Prussia; incorporated in this Gau also was the northern scrap of Polish territory which included the towns of Suwalki and Augustów.

²² *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1939, I, p. 2042.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 1939, I, p. 2135.

²³ *Ibid.* 1940, I, p. 251.

In 1939, Polish estimates set the Polish section of the population in the incorporated areas at 92 per cent in Posnania, 91 per cent in Pomorze, and 93 per cent in Silesia. Thus, at the outbreak of the war, the Germans in these provinces comprised barely 6 per cent of the total population, or 600,000 out of a total of 10,740,000.²⁵ Polish exiled government circles emphasize therefore that ethnographic considerations played no part in the demarcation of the German-occupied Polish territory. 'The regions incorporated with the Reich were the most Polish, as they contained the greatest percentage of Polish population. . . The new frontier was dictated by economic motives. The German idea was to incorporate with the Reich the richer districts of the greatest economic value.'²⁶ The fertile lands of Pomorze, Posnania, and Silesia were taken over by the Reich because before the war they had had a considerable surplus of agricultural production. In annexing this territory the Reich also acquired rich deposits of zinc and coal, so vital to modern industry. Of the 19 foundries operating in Poland before the war, 14 went to the Reich. The Germans seized about 90 per cent of Poland's prewar production of iron and steel, and in taking Lodz and Bielsk, they appropriated approximately 75 per cent of the Polish textile output.²⁷

The booty seized was vast and rich. To be made a permanent asset, the regions containing it had to be attached to the Reich in some more organic way. The actual ethnic composition of the area was a permanent *memento mori* for the German conquerors. It was therefore imperative to alter radically the ethnic balance—to de-Polonize the area and to Germanize it.

Faced by a difficult situation, made even more formidable by the density of the population, the Reich laid down two funda-

²⁵ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 143.

²⁷ *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland, September 1939-June 1941*, pp. 14-15.

mental propositions: first, the Polish and Jewish elements must be forcibly dislodged; and second, German colonists must be settled in mass on the soil. The prerequisite for the realization of the first part of this program was the mass deportation of Poles and Jews; the second part presupposed a mass transfer of German settlers from abroad. Both policies were inaugurated and vigorously implemented by the Reich.

XVI

Clearing of the Resettlement Area

I

THE system of mass deportations and depopulation carried out by the Third Reich in the incorporated Polish areas was by no means the original invention of the leaders of National Socialist Germany, but in their hands it became a highly elaborated program organically linked with the general National Socialist ideology. As early as 1927, Alfred Rosenberg, one of the most influential National Socialist theorists, wrote that 'the disappearance of the Polish state is the chief necessity for Germany.'¹ He declared openly that there must be no consideration for Poles, Czechs, and others, who were as impotent as they were valueless and overbearing, that they must be driven back to the east, so that the soil might become free to be tilled by the horny hands of Teutonic peasants.² Quoting these words fourteen years later, Peter Viereck stated that 'today Hitler is converting into appalling reality the Rosenberg theory about what to do with Slavs.'³

On the eve of Hitler's accession to power in 1932, a meeting of the National Socialist party inner circle members was called to discuss the main lines of an 'eastern policy.' At this meeting, the necessity for a planned program not only of colonization but also of depopulation was strongly emphasized. Hitler favored especially the depopulation aspect of the planning. He stressed the thesis that the predominantly Slav Eastern European areas 'have had for centuries only a thin upper crust of Germanhood.

¹ Rosenberg, *Der Zukunftsweg einer deutschen Politik*, p. 463.

² Kolnai, *The War Against the West*, pp. 642-3.

³ Viereck, *Metapolitics*, p. 221.

Today in all these regions, alien races predominate. It will be our duty, if we wish to found our greater Reich for all time, to remove these races. There is no excuse for neglecting this. Our age provides us with the technical facilities for carrying through such transfers of population with comparative ease. Besides, the postwar period brought with it an internal migration of many millions of people, compared to which our enterprise will seem a trifle.’⁴

The outbreak of the war, the conquest of Poland, the incorporation of 23.7 per cent of the Polish territory into the Reich, and the Reich’s ‘new policy’ of transferring the German minorities from the Soviet sphere of influence created the conditions necessary for the realization of these plans. The whole German policy of mass deportation in the annexed Polish territories can be fully understood and correctly judged only in the light of the wider National Socialist conception of the German mission in the European East and in close relation to the transfers of German minorities from abroad.

A careful study of the timing of the deportations reveals that they were a kind of function of the transfer operations. As the authors of *The German New Order in Poland* summed it up: ‘The deportations, which were begun directly after the occupation of Poland, were particularly extensive during the autumn and winter of 1939-1940. They diminished a little during the summer. But they renewed on a large scale in the autumn of 1940 and are still [1941] going on.’⁵

Reviewing the course of the transfers, one notes that the autumn and winter of 1939-40 witnessed the evacuation of 61,500 Germans from Latvia and Estonia (October-December 1939), and of 128,000 from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew area (December 1939-February 1940). A temporary suspension of activity

⁴ Rauschning, *The Voice of Destruction*, pp. 30 ff.

⁵ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 164.

ensued. Then during the period from September to November 1940, 93,000 Germans were transferred from Bessarabia and 98,000 from both parts of Bukovina. And from January to March 1941, more than 50,000 Germans were transferred from Lithuania and over 16,000 were involved in the final evacuation from Estonia and Latvia. Within this chronological framework the schedule of deportations can be fitted with implications that are inescapable.

II

The first and heaviest wave of deportations affected the towns of the incorporated area, where the masses of Poles and Jews were subjected to an enforced and speedy expulsion. This German preference for the towns is generally explained by their intention to break the Polish and Jewish numerical, economic, and cultural predominance in the urban centers, and by the relative ease of handling the deportation proceedings in areas of concentrated population. These reasons are, of course, correct as far as they go. But they are not sufficient. The priority given to the towns in scheduling the deportations was to a great extent determined by the urgent necessity of providing dwellings and occupational opportunities for the tens of thousands of Baltic Germans, among whom some 80 per cent were engaged in the urban professions. Thus the first to be removed from the towns were the Jews, the Polish intellectual class, the clergy, and the middle class.

Mass deportations from Polish towns began on 12 October 1939, a few days after the start of the Reich parleys with the governments of Estonia and Latvia on the evacuation of the German minorities, and they increased in intensity on 16 and 22 October, simultaneously with the arrival of the ships bringing the first groups of Germans from Estonia. In November came the influx of Latvian Germans, and the deportations spread to more towns in Posnania and Silesia.

The first locality affected was Orlowo, the summer resort on the Baltic between Gdynia and Danzig. Placards were posted announcing that 'in the interest of public safety it has been arranged that the Polish population of Orlowo shall be evacuated to the west of the railway. . . Each person may take with him such personal belongings as he can carry. Houses must be left open with keys in the doors. . . Those who resist will be immediately shot. Destruction of furniture and dwellings will be treated as sabotage.' The expulsion was directed by armed German police, and the evacuees were sent in cattle trucks to the Government General.⁶ A few days later, on 16 October, it was the turn of Gdynia, the largest Polish port, with a population of 130,000, 99 per cent of whom were Poles. The evacuation lasted several weeks, and the methods adopted were the same as at Orlowo.

The deportations from Poznan, capital of Western Poland and a city of 270,000 began on 22 October. At 7:30 in the morning, the *Feldgendarmarie* and the German *Selbstschutz* (self-defense) entered the houses, awakened the sleeping tenants, and gave them fifteen to thirty minutes in which to dress. The first victims were the rich merchants. From then on, Poles and Jews were deported almost every night. By the end of February 1940, the number of exiles was estimated at about 70,000, and it grew considerably after that. Various methods of selecting persons to be deported were employed: one day all the lawyers were deported; on the next, certain streets were cleared regardless of the residents' professions; and on the third, the Germans reverted to the system of designating professions and the blow fell on all engineers.⁷

In similar fashion, through November and December 1939 and the succeeding months, the Polish and Jewish population were deported in large groups from other towns of Posnania and Silesia. On 9 November, 300 families were deported from

⁶ Ibid. pp. 178 ff.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 160, 175 ff.

Gniezno, the ancient capital of Poland and a town of 30,000 inhabitants, and on 3 December, another 150 families were sent away. During the night of 30 November, 1,000 families were expelled from Inowroclaw, a Pomorze town with 40,000 inhabitants. Thousands of Poles and Jews were deported from Torun, Grudziadz, Chelmno, Leszno, Rawicz, Ostrów, Koscian, Powidz, Witkowo, Mogilno, Wrzesnia, Gostyn, Znin, Swardzecz, Krotozyn, Podbielska, and many others.

The expulsions were regularly accompanied by the wholesale expropriation of the deportees' movable and immovable property. At best, the exiles were allowed to take with them a suitcase of personal belongings weighing from 50 to 100 pounds. As a rule they were permitted to take only one or two changes of underwear, one overcoat, and one blanket. Spare clothes and extra bedding were forbidden. A particularly strict order stipulated that all jewelry (wedding rings were sometimes, but not always, excepted) and other objects of value, especially bonds, stock certificates, and the like, were to be left behind. Sometimes even the gold frames of spectacles were confiscated. The evacuees were allowed to take only 20 zlotys (\$3.80) in cash, although in exceptional cases, 100 (\$19.00) or even 200 (\$38.00) were permitted. All cash in excess of the specified amount had to be surrendered to the officials in charge of the deportations. Keys to houses, wardrobes, and chests had to be left in the doors. In a number of instances, the deportees were ordered to wash up the dishes and kitchen utensils they were leaving behind.⁸

Polish government sources estimate the number of persons deported as of 1 March 1940 at 720,000.⁹ By 31 December of the same year, according to a provisional estimate of the government, the number had risen to about 1.5 million.¹⁰

There are no specific German figures on the subject, but Reich

⁸ Ibid. pp. 159, 179 ff.

⁹ Ibid. p. 200.

¹⁰ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Polish White Book*, p. 22.

authorities have never denied the Polish estimates. It is true that on 8 October 1940, Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter of the Wartheland, declared that only 183,000 Poles had been deported, in addition to the Poles who fled before the German armies.¹¹ He probably referred to the Warthegau alone, but it is difficult to reconcile this assertion with his own statement, a year later, that during his period of government, 120,450 houses containing 436,200 apartments had been seized.¹² Figuring conservatively that each of these apartments probably lodged three persons it appears that at least 1.3 million Poles and Jews were expelled from their Warthegau homes before October 1941. To this number must be added an unknown but certainly sizable number of deportees from Danzig-West Prussia and Upper Silesia.

The overwhelming majority of the deportees were directed to the Government General. Within a month 30,000 Poles were sent to Krakow alone.¹³ A substantial number were sent to Germany for forced labor, and others were sent to concentration camps.

¹¹ *Bulletin of International News*, 11 January 1941.

¹² *Polish News Bulletin*, 31 October 1941.

¹³ Stanislaw Stronski, 'Poland,' in *The Sixth Column. Inside the Nazi Occupied Countries*, p. 51.

XVII

The Machinery of Resettlement

I

ON 7 October 1939, the day after Hitler delivered his Reichstag speech on the repatriation policy of the Third Reich, he commissioned Heinrich Himmler, chief of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) and of the German police 'to take care of the repatriation of all *Volksdeutsche* from abroad who return to the Reich to stay, to take measures necessary for their resettlement, and to settle all problems arising in this connection.' In this capacity Himmler was empowered 'to avail himself of the existing bodies and institutions for the fulfillment of his assignment.' For the direction of all the co-operating bodies, a special office was created: 'The Reich Commission for Strengthening of Germanism,' with headquarters in Berlin.¹ Himmler retained the post of Reich Commissioner for himself; SS Brigade Leader Ulrich Greifelt was appointed chief of the office.

Early in 1940, Greifelt outlined the original structure of the commission.² It was divided into six main departments: Planning; Administration of Resettler Installation; Indemnity Payments; Finances; Central Land Office; Colonization Activities. In order to execute all its numerous duties, the commission enlisted the co-operation of a number of other organizations including the following: the *Reichsstelle für Raumordnung* (Reich Office for Regional Planning), the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (Office for Dealing with Those of German Race), and the *Deutsche Ein-*

¹ 'Umsiedlung und Festigung deutschen Volkstums,' in *Neues Bauern-tum*, November-December 1939, pp. 294-5.

² *Deutsche Verwaltung*, 2 January 1940.

wandererzentrale (EWZ) (Central Immigration Office), all of which were charged with general evacuation and resettlement problems; the Reich Ministry of the Interior, to which the immediate task of naturalization was entrusted; the *Volksdeutsche Einwandererberatungsstelle* (Advisory Office for Immigrants); the *Berufseinsatzstelle* (Office for Vocational Installation); the *Landesarbeitsamt* (Regional Labor Office); and the Reich Ministry of Finance.

The *Reichsstelle für Raumordnung*, according to the *Kölnische Zeitung* of 21 November 1940, was assigned 'to fill the unpopulated areas in the East by settling German peasants, German businessmen and workers, so that as a result a country truly German shall arise.'

The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* was charged with the immediate evacuation of the various German minority groups from the respective countries and with the investigation of the feasibility of their settlement. This office was established at Poznan, and was subdivided in twelve departments, of which the most important were those concerned with the settlement of repatriates on the land and in the liberal professions, with matters of education and culture, and with industrial and commercial affairs.³

EWZ, composed of representatives of all interested organizations and offices, was to handle the investigation, temporary shelter, and classification of the evacuees. The main duties of this office were the execution of the administrative measures necessary for the resettlers' incorporation into the Reich with special reference to naturalization, the decision on whether resettlers were to be dispatched to the Old Reich or to the East, and the securing of documents required by the resettlers for their further movements.⁴

³ Peter Carstens, 'Aus der Praxis der volksdeutschen Umsiedlung,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, April 1941, p. 156.

⁴ W. Gradmann, 'Die Erfassung der Umsiedler,' in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, May 1942, pp. 350-51.

To facilitate the process of naturalization the Reich Ministry of the Interior set up five offices through which every German arrival had to pass: Registration Office; Office for Examination and Issuance of Documents; Photographer's Office; Health Division; Office for Examination of Nationality. The functioning of this complicated apparatus was described in detail by Hans Krieg as follows: ⁵

The Registration Office and Office for Examination and Issuance of Documents were the first two divisions to be approached. Each person—that is, the head of the family, his wife, and each child over fifteen years old—received an envelope containing instructions and the necessary forms to be filled out (registration card, application for citizenship, lists of the property left in country of origin and of property brought by the evacuee). The registration card contained questions regarding name, family status, profession, place and date of birth, religion, citizenship, Aryan origin, parents, children, country of origin and date of arrival in the Reich, and present place of residence. When the completed registration card had been examined, each person received an identification card with a serial number. The identification number was then put on the registration card and the envelope, and thirteen copies of the card were made for various offices of the EWZ.

In the Photographer's Office pictures were taken of the resettlers with their identification numbers. An average of 800 persons were photographed daily, with the number occasionally reaching 1,100 in a single day. The sick and infirm who were unable to present themselves at the office were visited by the photographers at their homes or in hospitals.

The Health Division examined not only the state of health but also the hereditary biological characteristics of the resettlers. It thus provided a basis for naturalization proceedings and occupational classification.

⁵ Krieg, *Baltischer Aufbruch zum Deutschen Osten*, pp. 44-5.

The Office for Examination of Nationality dealt with applications for naturalization. Above all, the examiners, in close collaboration with the German organizations in the country of the evacuee's origin, tried to ascertain the precise relation of the applicant to the German *Volkstum*. The whole procedure was carried out rapidly, so that within a few days after submitting his application, the applicant could become naturalized.

During the process of investigation and selection, the decision was usually taken regarding the location of the repatriates' ultimate resettlement. According to Dr. W. Gradmann, a high official of the EWZ, the Führer's wish was that 'only the best, the soundest German blood must be colonized in the new eastern areas . . . everyone who does not fit into the specific conditions of life and demands of the East must be singled out.'⁶ The criteria applied, according to Gradmann, were physical fitness, origin, ethnic-political attitude, and vocational training.

Physicians of the EWZ Health Department determined the physical fitness of the resettlers. Those pronounced unfit for the East were designated for settlement in the Old Reich.

The investigation of descent and ethnic-political attitude was handled very carefully, and whether a settler was naturalized depended upon the result of this investigation. Persons of foreign stock were not granted citizenship unless the circumstances were exceptional. In cases of mixed marriages or the descendants of mixed marriages, naturalization was withheld for the time being, but the persons involved could later apply for re-examination of their cases, and their link to German ethnic nationality would then be carefully studied by experts from their country of origin.

Of least influence in the decision on the place of resettlement was the matter of vocational training. The only important question was whether the resettler capable of engaging in an occu-

⁶ Gradmann, 'Die Erfassung . . .' (cited above).

pation important for the war effort was essential to an industrial enterprise in the Old Reich. Since most of the resettlers were farmers, such cases were relatively few.

A basic principle of the resettlement was the maintenance of the family unity. It was not the practice to settle one part of the family in the East and another in the Old Reich.

The most important document at the disposal of the resettlement staff was the EWZ card, compiled on the same basis as the regular *Arbeitskarte* (workbook) used by the labor offices. Such a record was kept for each resettler in the EWZ vocational placement office. In addition to personal data on all members of the family, the card contained information on the property left behind and that which was brought along, on the size and nature of previous business or occupation, and the results of the investigation made by the Health Office and Citizenship Office. The EWZ card constituted a summary of all data assembled by that organization and thus supplied all information necessary for the installation of the resettler.

The *Volksdeutsche Einwandererberatungsstelle*, which established its main office in Poznan and a branch in Berlin, was charged with the further care of (*Betreuung*) and the giving of advice to (*Beratung*) the evacuated Germans.⁷

The *Berufseinsatzstelle*, whose aid was sought by the commission, was entrusted with the investigation of the repatriates' professional capacities. The results of such investigation were compiled in a complete card index kept on file in Poznan to furnish the data necessary for a systematic, well-considered vocational reestablishment of the evacuees.

The *Landesarbeitsamt*, another auxiliary group, was charged with the immediate task of settlement. This office was in possession of all the information on manpower needs and used the card index described above to help in meeting these needs. The in-

⁷ 'Umsiedlung und Festigung . . .' (cited above), p. 295.

stallation of the persons trained in the liberal professions was effected in close co-operation with the Chambers of Physicians and Lawyers. In the field of agricultural settlement, the help of the *Reichsnährstand* (Agricultural Estate) was secured, while the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Handicraft Chamber co-operated in the installation of artisans and industrial workers. The co-operation of the 'competent instances of the party' was, of course, both permanent and vigilant.

The Reich Ministry of Finance fulfilled its functions through a property supervision office and a local office of the Reichsbank. The former was charged with registering the declaration of each repatriate regarding the property he had brought with him and that which he had left behind in his former residence. The latter was concerned with meeting the most urgent financial needs of the new arrivals, who generally brought only very little cash. If the Reichsbank representatives decided that a loan should be granted, the resettler was given a money order drawn on the Dresdner Bank, to be considered an advance on the value of the property or the funds he had left in his former homeland. All these advances were later accounted for in the settlements made by the DUT. The local office of the Reichsbank also supervised the liquidation of the valuables brought by the evacuees or left in their homelands, in accordance with the laws on foreign exchange, and it was further charged with the establishment of exchange offices through private banks to enable the repatriates to exchange their money for reichsmarks without any appreciable loss of time.

II

A highly specialized and complex machinery for the organization of the resettlement work was set up also in the incorporated provinces. In Danzig-West Prussia and in Warthegau, a higher SS and police leader was assigned to each of the two Gauleiters, Albert Forster and Arthur Greiser, who were also deputies of

the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germanism.⁸ In Warthegau, where the resettlement work progressed especially fast, this leader created at the very beginning of the resettlement action, in fulfilment of Hitler's order and in agreement with Gauleiter Greiser, a special *Ansiedlungsstab* (settlement staff) with headquarters in Lodz; *Kreis-Arbeitsstäbe* (district staffs) in single districts were set up as subsidiaries to the Lodz staff. Every *Arbeitsstab* comprised 25 to 50 members, half of them practical farmers assigned by the *Reichsnährstand*,⁹ and the other half composed of 'tried representatives of various party groups.' The management of the *Arbeitsstab* was entrusted to specially trained and experienced SS leaders, who were assigned for the purpose by the SS Racial and Settlement Office.

A series of institutions co-operated in the immediate resettlement work. The *National Sozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV) took care of such practical necessities as beds, kitchen utensils, and the like. The DUT branches engaged in all manner of administrative, taxational, financial, and other activities connected with the resettlement. The Gauleiter himself, through various agencies, provided for such supplies as seed corn and compost. He made full use of the *Bauernsiedlungen* (peasant settlement societies), which were subordinated to his control and which, in theory, were supposed to work for the future installation of German front-line soldiers. They assumed these additional duties in the interests of the settlers. In Warthegau there were three organizations of this kind—in Inowroclaw, in Poznan, and in Kalisz—and in Danzig-West Prussia there was one. The Reich Ministry of Food furnished each of these societies with capital that in 1941 amounted to 2 million reichsmarks.

The administration of the confiscated urban property of the Polish state and Polish citizens was assigned to the *Haupttreu-*

⁸ Ibid. p. 295.

⁹ 'Der deutsche Osten nach einem Jahr,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 September 1940.

handstelle Ost (HTO) (Main Trust Office East), created by a decree of 1 November 1939. This office maintained headquarters in Berlin and six branches, called *Treuhandstellen*, in Katowice, Poznan, Ciechanów, Suwalki, Lodz, and Danzig.¹⁰ Under the supervision of the *Treuhandstelle* in Poznan there was a *Grundstückgesellschaft* (Land Estate Company) to handle the former Polish land, and a *Hotel- und Gastwirtschaftsgesellschaft* (Hotel and Inn Company) to administer the former Polish establishments.¹¹

A *Deutsche Wohn- und Siedlungsgesellschaft* (Housing and Settling Company) was created by the DUT at Poznan with a capital of 1 million reichsmarks for 'political housing purposes.' Agricultural and forest estates taken from Polish citizens were managed, until they were assigned to the German settlers, by the *Ostdeutsche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft m.b.H.* (East German Agricultural Society) and its supplementary organizations, the above-mentioned peasant settlement societies.¹² These societies were required to make the necessary alterations in the arrangement of farms intended for Germans, to join smaller units into larger, and to supplement the livestock and equipment.¹³

A very important role in the settlement of the evacuated Germans, the legal definition of which, however, is extremely difficult, was played by the National Socialist party. According to an article by Gauleiter Forster, which appeared in all German newspapers early in October 1941, it was one of the party's most important functions to look after the hundreds of thousands of Germans transferred to the incorporated areas from all parts of the world, to imbue these culturally and socially heterogeneous elements with the National Socialist spirit so that they could

¹⁰ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, pp. 204, 254.

¹¹ Paul Batzer, 'Wirtschaftsausbau im Warthegau,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 October 1941.

¹² 'Der Ostraum' in *Siedlung und Wirtschaft*, December 1939.

¹³ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. pp. 203-4.

take part in the political life of those areas in which they had been settled.¹⁴ Since 1941, the party, in fulfilment of Greiser's orders, had considerably intensified its activities in Warthegau. This was especially true of the women's divisions. In 1940, the *Deutsches Mädchenbund* (German Girls League) registered 1,400 volunteers for the work in the East; in 1941 the number jumped to 9,973, and in 1942, to 19,000.¹⁵ In 1942, 30,000 members of the *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler Youth) spent their holidays in Western Poland, working on farms of new German settlers.¹⁶

This, then, was the general structure of the machinery set up by the Reich for the resettlement of the transferred German minority groups, reconstructed as accurately as possible on the basis of varied and scattered German and Polish sources. It must be admitted that even the most detailed and objective study of the numerous organizations involved and of their projected functions fails to reveal any clear and organic interrelationship among the many bodies. In this instance the German genius for organization seems to have succumbed to an almost pathological over-organization, and the result was a wide discrepancy between the apparently skilful complexity of the set-up and the efficiency of its operation.

¹⁴ 'Germanization in Western Poland,' in *Polish Fortnightly Review*, 1 May 1942, no. 43, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 28 August 1942.

¹⁶ *Polish Feature and News Service*, no. 51, September 1942.

XVIII

Financial Aspects of the Resettlement

THE resettlement of some 500,000 Germans in the incorporated Polish provinces presented not only political, legal, and transportation problems, but also, and perhaps most important of all, a huge and immensely complicated financial problem. This aspect of the transfer was regulated by the provisions of the six treaties concluded with the governments of Estonia, Latvia, the Soviet Union, and Romania. In general, the transferees had the right to take with them only their movable property, all or part of their livestock, and very small amounts in cash. The remainder of their cash funds, their bank accounts, and sums obtained from the sale of their abandoned property had to be transferred on the basis of special clearing agreements between the Reich and the countries that they had left.

The Reich assumed entire responsibility for the full compensation of the repatriated Germans for the property they abandoned. As indicated in earlier chapters, the practical results of this arrangement were most unfortunate for the Reich, since it received nothing or very little for the property. The obligation to compensate the evacuees, however, remained in force, and the Reich made no attempt to disclaim responsibility. The reasons for this attitude may be attributed not so much to the moral integrity of the National Socialist leaders as to the practical aims of the whole transfer problem. This policy was initiated largely in order to Germanize the incorporated Polish provinces by replacing the deported Poles and Jews by German farmers, tradesmen, industrialists, and members of the liberal professions. To establish these Germans securely, it was necessary to assure

them of a sound economic basis, more or less comparable to their former economic status.

Ulrich Greifelt formulated the main duty of the Reich Commissioner toward the resettlers under his care as follows: 'It was necessary to assign to them as soon as possible a suitable and constructive field of activity and to undertake a property settlement, which would represent an equitable solution for every resettler, taking into account the different living costs.' The main form of this compensation was termed by Greifelt *Naturalersatz* (compensation in kind), that is, the 'resettler should be assigned an enterprise equal in size and kind.'¹ A farmer was to get a farm comparable in value to his former homestead; the shopkeeper, manufacturer, or craftsman was to be given a shop, a factory, or a handicraft establishment similar to the one he left behind; the professional man was to be assigned a job or a practice corresponding to his former position. Only in exceptional cases or as additional compensation were cash amounts turned over to the resettlers.

The *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 9 February 1941 described the application of this basic principle. 'When a German settler in the Warthegau wished to obtain, for example, a sawmill, he would do his utmost to become the trustee for the particular sawmill he had in mind. Looking for a sawmill for him, the DUT would assure itself that out of the total wealth he left in his former fatherland, and which was credited to the DUT, there would be enough to pay for the sawmill.'

This compensation in kind was rendered not only possible but relatively easy by the mass deportation of the Polish and Jewish population and the wholesale expropriation of their property. Vast lands and great numbers of well-furnished houses and apartments, countless business and professional opportunities were thus made available to the transferred Germans. Since none of

¹ Greifelt, 'Wirtschaftliche Festigung des deutschen Volkstums,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 October 1941.

these cost the Reich a penny, the German colonization authorities were able to dispose of them very liberally. To enable the resettlers to take over and expand these farms and enterprises, sizable credits were granted them on the strength of the money and property they had abandoned.

As noted above, the entire financial regulation of the transfer was concentrated in one central institution in Berlin, the DUT. This organization was entrusted not only with the liquidation of the immovable property and other interests left behind by the German evacuees, but also with the administrative, taxational, and financial aspects of the actual resettlement. Thus its work started in the former homelands of the resettlers and ended only 'with the final compensation for the property left behind.'² Its initial duties included the registration, management, appraisal, liquidation, and transfer of property values; its further responsibility involved the selection, appraisal, and procurement of suitable compensation. Until the time of their final installation, the resettlers obtained from the DUT weekly allowances, advance payments on their abandoned property, subsidies for the establishment of new households, and finally, in anticipation of the eventual property settlement, the means for building a new existence.³

The DUT was created in the fall of 1939 with an initial capital of 1 million reichsmarks (\$400,000). Originally, it made wide use of state funds, but later, in order to spare public means, a special *Ostkonsortium* headed by the Dresdner Bank put at the disposal of the DUT credits amounting to 100 million reichsmarks for the settlement in the East.⁴

During the first period of its activity, between the autumn of

² 'Die finanzielle Regelung der Umsiedlung,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, April 1941, pp. 171-2.

³ *Ibid.* p. 172.

⁴ Similar credits amounting to 60 million reichsmarks were granted to the DUT by a *Tirolkonsortium* headed by the Kreditanstalt Bankverein for the resettlement of the Tyrol Germans.

1939 and the end of 1940, the DUT opened four foreign branches: the *Deutsche Treuhandverwaltung* in Tallinn, the *Umsiedlungs Treuhand-Aktiengesellschaft* (UTAG) in Riga, the *Deutsche Abwicklungsstelle für die Umsiedlung Rumäniens*, and the *Deutsche Abwicklungs Treuhand G.m.b.H.* in Poznan. The first three dealt with the transfer of Germans from the Baltic states and of those from Southern Bukovina and Dobruja, whose ultimate destination was the incorporated Polish areas. In addition, there was a temporary liaison office in Lublin and a branch in Lodz.⁵ As noted in an earlier chapter, the DUT had no branches in Wolhynia, Galicia, the Narew area, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, or Lithuania—all areas that were incorporated in the Soviet Union. The Soviet government did not tolerate the existence and activities of a foreign organization within its territory.

The DUT report on the first period of its activity stated that the 'property and legal interests of the resettlers should be dealt with in accordance with businesslike principles,' although the DUT was not in any sense a profit-making enterprise. Sums obtained from the sale of the German evacuees' property in the countries of their origin were entered on the books as 'obligation of the Reich Führer SS'; as the installation of the resettlers progressed, the compensation payments made to the resettlers were deducted from these 'obligations.' The advance payments in cash and the reconstruction, equipment, and liquidation loans were indicated on the books as 'credits given at the order of the SS Reich Führer.' During this first period, the DUT had at its disposal very little money from the liquidation of the resettlers' property abroad, and it operated almost exclusively on bank loans secured by the resettlers' property and guaranteed by the Reich. Of the 34.22 million reichsmark credits and compensation granted by the DUT to the resettled Germans, 27.51 million or 80 per cent were guaranteed by the Reich. The distribution of

⁵ 'Die finanzielle Regelung . . .' (cited above), pp. 171-2.

the credits and compensation payments among various occupational groups is shown by Table 1.

It is noteworthy that the major emphasis was placed on the financing of agriculture, commerce, and industry, while relatively little support was given to members of the liberal professions and to artisans. It appears also from the large proportion of credits amounting to more than 10,000 marks that the DUT favored the larger economic units in industry and commerce. The same tendency prevailed in the allotment of credits to members of the liberal professions, but a diametrically opposed policy governed the grants to agriculture and handicrafts.

By the end of its first year, the DUT had granted to the resettled Germans 7,748 credits guaranteed by the Reich. Of these credits, the Baltic Germans received 6,138, totaling 17.56 million reichsmarks, and the Germans from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew area received 1,332, amounting to 3.42 million reichsmarks.⁶ The Baltic Germans received, in addition, 281 *Anschaffungskredite* (purveyance credits), amounting to 1.49 million reichsmarks. Altogether the resettled German groups received 19,244 credits, totaling 5.16 million reichsmarks for household purposes, including credits for earnest money and furniture.

The DUT report on its services to resettlers during 1941⁷ reveals that by the end of that year allowances and subsidies for the transition period had reached a total value of 27.12 million reichsmarks. Advance payments and cash credits extended during the year brought the total in that category to 106.78 million reichsmarks, an increase of 65.31 million reichsmarks over the figure of 31 December 1940. During the year, 2,894 additional purveyance credits were given, bringing the total of that type of resettler aid to 21.47 million reichsmarks. Thus the total num-

⁶ Germans from the South Tyrol received 281 credits, amounting to 6.52 million reichsmarks.

⁷ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 April 1942.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF LOANS TO RESETTLERS, AND OF TOTAL LOANS AND COMPENSATION PAYMENTS, 1940,
BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS *

<i>Occupational Group</i>	<i>Loans to Resettlers</i>			<i>Total Loans and Compensation Payments to Resettlers</i>			
	<i>In amts. of less than 10,000 RM</i>	<i>In amts. of more than 10,000 RM</i>	<i>Total amt.</i>	<i>In amts. of less than 10,000 RM</i>	<i>In amts. of more than 10,000 RM</i>	<i>Total amt.</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Industry.....	0.83 RM	6 42 RM	7.25 RM	0.94 RM	6.52 RM	7.45 RM	21.8%
Commerce.....	3.93	4.08	8.01	4.34	4.99	9.38	27.3
Handicrafts.....	2.17	0.63	2.80	2.55	0.69	3.24	9.5
Liberal professions...	0.71	3 04	3.75	1.21	3.04	4.25	12.5
Agriculture.....	4.14	1.56	5.70	8.33	1.56	9.90	28.9
TOTAL.....	11.78	15.73	27 51	17.37	16.80	34.22	100.0

* Monetary figures in millions of ringgit. The table covers the period from autumn 1939 through 1940.

ber of credit transactions by the end of 1941 reached 649,668 with a value of 155.37 million reichsmarks. In addition, 25,575 transactions involving partial or full compensation of resettler accounts increased the total value of such payments to 21.85 million reichsmarks.

The number of DUT branches increased considerably during its second year. By the end of 1941, there were branches in Poznan, Danzig, and Katowice.⁸ Liaison offices were also established in Bialystok and in Lwów, to investigate the property left behind by the Germans evacuated between December 1939 and February 1940 from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew area, areas that were at that time under Soviet rule but had been conquered in July 1941 by the armies of the Reich. The number of officials grew from 1,200 to 1,688, and later to 1,750.⁹

Excerpts from the DUT report for 1942, published in the German press on 4 April 1943, shed further light on the organization's activity. During the year, 13 new liaison offices were established, while the number of officials decreased from 1,893 to 1,701. The balance in favor of DUT rose from 148 million reichsmarks at the end of 1941¹⁰ to 245 million at the end of 1942, an increase of 70 per cent; 76,810 resettler accounts out of 209,374 were listed as completely compensated; the amount of compensations paid rose from 80 million reichsmarks to 218 million reichsmarks, an increase of 170 per cent; the balance in favor of the resettlers stood at 66.66 million reichsmarks. The report states in this connection that, in 1942, DUT no longer treated credits given to the resettlers in cash or some other form and secured by the property they left behind as purveyance or working capital credits; it considered them anticipated compensation payments. It was DUT policy to transfer this kind of credit to private financial institutions at the earliest opportunity.

⁸ Similar branches were opened in Innsbruck for the Tyrol Germans and in Maribor for the Gottschee Germans.

⁹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 April 1942.

¹⁰ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 April 1942.

XIX

Germanization of the Soil

I

SPEAKING at Poznan at the observance of the second anniversary of the creation of the Warthegau, Gauleiter Greiser stated that as of October 1941, 337,192 farms comprising 7.7 million acres, that is, 80 per cent of the total area of cultivated land in his Gau, had been expropriated from Polish owners.¹ In Danzig-West Prussia, according to the statement of Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Poles were expelled from some 35,000 holdings, while in Silesia, 15,500 peasants were deprived of farms amounting to 54,500 acres, and in Ciechanów district about 18,000 farms were confiscated.² In addition, the Germans took over 5,500 larger estates of more than 125 acres each. The expropriated livestock in the Warthegau alone was estimated at 1.3 million head of cattle, 1.4 million pigs, and 0.5 million horses.³ No indemnity was paid.

The expropriation of land was followed, or preceded, by the removal of its owners. First to be removed were the larger landowners, who were deported from the rural districts of Posenania, Pomorze, and Silesia in the early autumn of 1939, almost simultaneously with the expulsion of Polish intellectuals, clergy, and middle class from the towns. The deportation of Polish landowners from the regions farther to the east—the districts of Suwalki, Ciechanów, Włocławek, Płock, Łódź, Kalisz, Biała,

¹ *Polish News Bulletin*, no. 103, 31 October 1941.

² Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, 'Germans Destroy Polish Rural Economy,' in *Polish Review*, no. 20, 25 May 1942.

³ *Bulletin of International News*, December 1940, p. 1611.

Żywiec, and others—began shortly after Posen and Pomorze had been dealt with.

The replacement of some 5,500 Polish owners of the larger estates was not too difficult a task for the German authorities. Local landowners of German nationality were fairly numerous in those districts where the expropriation occurred, and their managers, who were familiar with the soil and local farming and marketing conditions, were able to take over the administration of the former Polish estates. By January 1940, in the district of Poznan alone, 70 *Volksdeutsche* were running 107,000 acres of 'orphaned' Polish estates averaging more than 190 acres each.⁴ The German authorities soon had also at their disposal numerous agriculturally trained persons from the Baltic countries, who were accustomed to managing large and medium-size estates. Their task was further simplified by the fact that most of the Polish farm laborers and some of the administrative personnel employed on the confiscated estates were permitted to remain at their posts. The Germans were especially anxious not to jeopardize agricultural production in the incorporated provinces; in fact, they hoped to increase the output even during the redistribution of property. Thus the whole transfer of the larger estates from Polish to German hands was carried out in relatively quick order.

In December 1939 and the following two months, the most severe winter in decades, the Germans turned their attention to the owners of smaller estates and farms. The first to be expelled were the peasants of Danzig-West Prussia and Warthegau. They were driven out on a few hours' notice and were not permitted to take anything with them except small parcels. Then came the turn of the Polish peasants in the central and southern sections of Poland incorporated into the Reich. In January a mass expulsion was effected in the region of Plock and the districts of Ciechanów, Wloclawek, Kalisz, and Konin. From September to

⁴ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 18 January 1940.

November 1940, there was a fresh wave of deportations from the Żywiec area. The estates and farms of the deportees were confiscated and assigned for management to German trustees.⁵

Legalization of these measures was provided by a decree of 12 February 1940 concerning the public management of agricultural and forestry concerns and lands in the incorporated eastern areas.⁶ It was stipulated that all such properties that on 1 September 1939 were not owned by persons of German nationality should be publicly managed. The decree avoids the explicit term 'expropriation,' using instead 'taking into possession,' but it clearly refers to the actual expropriation of about 450,000 peasant land-owning families, the extent of whose property in land forests (including state property) amounted to more than 13 million acres. The order gave legal form to a situation already existing in so far as the large and medium-sized estates were concerned, for at the time when it was issued the Polish landowners had been expelled from their properties.⁷

Polish sources assert that the German authorities in the incorporated areas had no reason to boast of the trustees' management of these farms. It is reported that the trustees 'caring exclusively for their own material gains, have on the whole managed badly; their parasitic economy has given unsatisfactory results. It was only a year before the need for introducing radical changes in the administration of the confiscated estates arose.'⁸

The change in actual ownership of the smaller holdings could not, of course, be effected so smoothly and quickly as it had been in the case of the large estates. The very number of these smaller units—some 450,000—presented a major difficulty. It proved impossible to import and settle several hundred thousand German peasant families within a brief period. And because the uninter-

⁵ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, pp. 158-9, 196-8, 302.

⁶ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1, no. 30, 17 October 1940, pp. 90-92.

⁷ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 255.

⁸ Ibid. p. 302.

rupted cultivation of the soil was necessary for insuring the Reich food supply, it was not practicable to have all the Polish peasants removed. A large part of them were, therefore, permitted to remain on the farms, at least temporarily, in order to maintain the agricultural output.

In addition to feeding themselves and their families they were required to deliver at least 25 per cent of their crop to the German authorities. Mikolajczyk stated that it was only the desire to maintain production that limited the deportations. He explained further that it was this same insistence on sustained output that caused the expulsions to take place mainly in winter.⁹

A typical situation is mirrored in a report prepared in December 1940 on conditions in Żywiec county:

The entire population of any particular village was not deported at once; some inhabitants were left in peace. It appeared that this was done because the agricultural laborers left behind were needed to dig potatoes and finish agricultural operations for the incoming Germans. . . . Those of the inhabitants who were not deported at first had their turn later, only a few families being left in each village. The deportees were quartered in remote cottages high in the mountains. Two or three families were crowded into each cottage, for which they were compelled to pay rent ranging from seven to twenty marks.¹⁰

According to German sources, by August 1941 more than 0.5 million of these small Polish farms were controlled by the German agricultural trust, *Ostland*, through German commissioners.¹¹ That fall, the agricultural 'ownership structure' of the Warthegau was described by Gauwirtschaftsberater Paul Batzer, as follows: '1/8 of the cultivated land was in the hands of *Volksdeutsche* peasants; 1/8 was owned by the *Volksdeutsche* land proprietors; 2/8 were administered by the *Ostdeutsche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft m.b.H.* on behalf of the state (mainly the con-

⁹ Mikolajczyk, op. cit.

¹⁰ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. pp. 197-8.

¹¹ *Der Deutsche Volkswirt*, 29 August 1941.

fiscated larger holdings of Polish landowners); $\frac{4}{8}$ remained in the hands of farmers.'¹² Another formulation of the situation stated that 'of the 3.2 million hectares [7,907,200 acres] of land taken from the Poles, scarcely ten per cent has been given to new owners; the remainder is administered by the German trustees.'¹³

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the small peasant estates were generally spared. By the end of 1940, 23,000 resettler families numbering between 140,000 and 150,000 persons had already been 'allotted farms which formerly belonged to small Polish farmholders.'¹⁴ The agricultural areas not destined for immediate distribution among the resettlers were taken over by the six *Bauernsiedlungen* which functioned in the *Ostraum*. In this way, the *Ostpreussische Landgesellschaft* obtained the management of the whole district of Ciechanów with 125,900 small-sized farms and 600 large agricultural estates, amounting to 2,470,000 acres of cultivated land.

II

The confiscated Polish farms and estates were subjected to a speedy but thorough investigation. The *Ansiedlungsstäbe* (re-settlement staffs) began early in the fall of 1939 to inventory all the available Polish farms, to map each estate, to study local soil conditions, to prepare village projects, and, in general, to organize the settlement of the transferred Germans. Within a short time, a register of all farms, and their livestock and equipment was ready; the 'economic basis' of each prospective German farm was thus established.¹⁵

When it came to more detailed planning within this frame-

¹² Batzer, 'Wirtschaftsausbau in Warthegau,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 October 1941, pp. 1118-21.

¹³ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 206.

¹⁴ Carl Hartwich, 'Bauernland im Osten,' in *Das Reich*, 26 January 1941.

¹⁵ Peter Carstens, 'Aus der Praxis der volksdeutschen Umsiedlung,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, April 1941, pp. 151-2.

work, many organizations were called on for aid. In December 1939, the chief of the *Reichsstelle für Raumordnung* charged the *Reichsgemeinschaft für Raumordnung* with making a study of the 'new German East,' with special emphasis on its absorptive capacity and on the possibilities of strengthening and consolidating the German *Volkstum* in this area.¹⁶ Early the next spring, the *Reichstudentenführung der Bundesleitung des Volksbundes für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (Reich Leadership of the Students' Organization of the League for Germandom in Foreign Countries) created a special *Ostsiedlung* group of 320 volunteers who worked systematically on the 'preliminary planning for the settlement of the *Volksdeutsche* repatriates,' preparing data for the settlement staffs in key cities of the incorporated Polish provinces on the agricultural training and experience of the prospective resettlers, and on their racial origins and political convictions. On the basis of this information the settlement staffs elaborated detailed projects for the colonization of the repatriated German folk groups.

The problems involved in this resettlement were many and complex, since the colonists came from countries quite different in physical and economic characteristics from their new homeland. As the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* of 26 April 1940 emphasized: 'One cannot settle a Wolhynian used to sandy soil and many meadows on turnip soil with few meadows; nor can a Galician from the good loamy region of Stryj or Tarnopol be transferred to a sandy soil. . . Long ago the settlement staff selected farms suitable both in size and in the composition of the soil.'¹⁷

Preparation for the settlement was not limited to the purely theoretical. Edmund Beyl pointed out that the resettlers who

¹⁶ 'Der Ostraum,' in *Siedlung und Wirtschaft*, December 1939.

¹⁷ 'Der Volksdeutsche,' March 1940; Georg Blohm, 'Der Aufbau der Siedlungs- und Beratungswesen in den neuen Ostgebieten,' in *Neues Bauern-tum*, January 1941, pp. 11-14.

took over farms left by Poles depended on the community for a long time because so much was missing. The job of assisting the new settlers in every way was assigned to regional leaders of the National Socialist party, regional peasant leaders, and regional leaders of the NSV.¹⁸ Much of the repair work and installation of new equipment was done by construction units of the *Arbeitsstäbe* and by the *Siedlungsgesellschaften*. Some 13,800 farms had to be completely rebuilt. It was necessary to bring houses, stables, and barns up to German standards and to improve the farms with additional buildings. Furthermore, new equipment had to be provided for *Volksdeutsche* farms that had been destroyed by military action.¹⁹ As of 14 December 1940, the construction units had repaired and made habitable 4,787 farms, and before the winter of 1940-41 had set in, the construction units and *Bauernsiedlungen* together had prepared clean homes worthy of human beings for nearly all resettlers.²⁰

The new German farms were also stocked with implements, grains, and livestock. By the end of 1940, the 23,000 German families (some 130,000 persons) who had settled on 790,000 acres in the incorporated provinces had received 124,784,000 pounds of grain for sowing and reserves, and 18,150,400 pounds of compost, 4,150 pieces of large agricultural machinery, 37,750 pieces of medium-sized machinery, 7,260 small machines, and a large number of tools. The settlers also got 29,300 head of horses and cattle, 42,600 pigs, and large numbers of sheep and poultry. All this was supplementary to what was left on the farms by the evicted Poles.²¹

The farms occupied by 35,000 German resettlers in the Warthegau were equipped with 100,000 agricultural machines

¹⁸ Edmund Beyl, 'Soziale Probleme im deutschen Osten,' in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, January 1941, p. 29.

¹⁹ Hartwich, op. cit.

²⁰ Carstens, op. cit. p. 152.

²¹ Hartwich, op. cit.

worth 22 million marks,²² while the value of the furniture and domestic utensils put at their disposal amounted to 12 million marks.²³ The reconditioning of the farms assigned to the 9,960 German resettler families in Danzig-West Prussia cost 25 million marks.²⁴

Even after the repatriated German peasants were settled on the new lands, they continued to enjoy the closest attention of the German authorities, who supervised the agricultural work of the newcomers. 'Where the task of the peasant settlement societies ends, the work of the settlement adviser begins,' wrote Georg Blohm. Blohm emphasized that a settlement of such large proportions naturally created problems of economic development which could not be solved by the vocational training of the youth and the usual propaganda, and that, for years to come, it would be necessary to take care of each settler. He recommended that there should be one settlement adviser for every 50, or at most, every 100 settlers.²⁵

The German conception of the 'new German East' envisioned the incorporated areas primarily as an inexhaustible and expanding source of agricultural products for the Reich.²⁶ The Warthegau was grandiloquently called 'the granary of the Reich,' and the role assigned to it is indicated by the preamble to a German rationing decree published in 1941: '... to provide food and foodstuffs for the population and the military forces in the Reichsgau Wartheland as well as to insure a sufficient delivery of agricultural products to the other parts of the Reich. . .' ²⁷

In support of this program, the German authorities introduced

²² *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 July 1944.

²³ *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 7 October 1943.

²⁴ *Danziger Vorposten*, 16 October 1943.

²⁵ Blohm, *op. cit.* pp. 11-14.

²⁶ 'Kornkammer des Reiches' in *Krakauer Zeitung*, 4 April 1940; 'Danzig-Westpreussen wird Überschussgebiet,' in *Krakauer Zeitung*, 7/8 April 1940.

²⁷ *Verordnungsblatt des Reichsstatthalters im Reichsgau Wartheland*, 1941, p. 91.

some basic modifications of the agriculture in the incorporated areas. The most important of these was the shift from grain production to root crops in the hope of a substantial increase in the output of fodder for animal consumption, and thus, indirectly, of edible fats, which represented the most serious food shortage in German-held Europe. Large areas were planted with sugar beets, and the extensive use of chemical fertilizers was advocated in an effort to increase production per acre.²⁸

III

At a meeting of National Socialist party leaders in the summer of 1932, called at the instance of Walter Darré, the future Minister of Agriculture, to discuss the main outlines of an 'eastern policy,' a new 'aristocracy of blood and soil' in a 'great German-ruled area in the East conquered by National Socialism' was proclaimed. The German *Herren* class was to be a class of large-scale farmers. 'The large-scale farmer in the eastern area must always be a German. . . No small peasantry, only large-scale farming, the creation of a new squirearchy. . . The agrarian bolshevism of systematically destroying the great estates would have to be firmly suppressed.'²⁹

The Reich made an energetic attempt to realize this concept of a new squirearchy within the framework of the new order in the incorporated Polish provinces. The structure of land ownership in these provinces prior to the German conquest was very similar to that in the western provinces of the Reich—a scarcity of large peasant properties, and an overwhelming preponderance of very small holdings.³⁰ Beyl asserted that the Polish state had deliberately split the large German holdings into

²⁸ Ernest S. Hediger, 'Nazi Economic Imperialism,' in *Foreign Policy Reports*, 15 August 1942, p. 146.

²⁹ Rauschnig, *The Voice of Destruction*, p. 36.

³⁰ *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland*, 1938, p. 63.

small farms for Polish colonists, and that these farms were kept as small as possible in order to accommodate large numbers of Poles. Because of their exceptionally low standard of living, he went on to explain, these Polish settlers were able not only to live on the small farms but also to sustain an increasing birth rate. 'Such a settlement policy is naturally impossible for us Germans,' Beyl stated proudly. 'Our aim is not to create small farms on which the farmers can neither live nor die. We wish to create a healthy and efficient peasantry possessing considerable property.'³¹

Accordingly the German colonization authorities in Poland concluded that out of the 275,000 peasant farms in Warthegau only a very small part were suitable for the German peasants, and that the numerous small farms of the former Russian districts, especially, could be colonized only after many of these farms had been merged.³² A Polish report of December 1940 gives a detailed account of the results of these German attempts 'to create larger farms than have existed hitherto.' In the densely populated Żywiec area, after the expulsion of the Polish peasants, a single family of Germans from Wolhynia replaced ten or twelve deported families, taking over all their fields, livestock, and farm equipment. As a rule, the German family was established in the best house, and all the other houses were destroyed and used for firewood.³³ Similar cases were reported by the *Bulletin Polski* of 19 June 1942. In the community of Buczek in the Sieradz area, 173 Polish peasant families were expelled and their farms were occupied by only 25 families of Bessarabian Germans; in the community of Wadlew, the farms of 171 deported Polish peasant families were given to 37 German families. Dr. Carl Hartwich related early in 1941 that 'so far in the district

³¹ Beyl, op. cit. p. 29.

³² Ibid. p. 29.

³³ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 197.

of Kattowitz [Katowice] 153 estates have been set up, each estate consisting of 12 small Polish farms on an average.'³⁴

There were also numerous instances when superfluous Polish dwellings were not destroyed but were converted into stables or cow sheds. The picture supplement of the *Neues Bauerntum* of December 1940, devoted to the 'first results of the upbuilding of the East,' showed a typical illustration—a German boy driving a cow into a Polish peasant home. The caption read: 'Since several former small farms were united and transformed into a large German estate, dwelling houses often served as stables.'

The creation of these larger German farms out of the ruins of the confiscated small Polish units was quite in harmony with the theory of the master class, or new squirearchy. But within a year and a half, this theory came into conflict with the main objective of the German policy in the conquered eastern areas—the decision to colonize densely the newly acquired areas with German peasants and in this way to erect a wall of German peasant farms along the new 1939 border.

As early as the spring of 1941, attentive observers could detect a change of tone in the German statements on this subject. Professor Konrad Meyer, chief of the *Hauptabteilung Planung und Boden* attached to the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism, undoubtedly expressed the conception prevailing among authoritative Reich circles at that period that the population density of 80 to 100 persons per square kilometer required by a far-sighted population policy could be achieved mainly through the establishment of peasant farms. Experience had proved that large agricultural undertakings with more than 500 acres of usable land could employ only 14 persons on every 250 acres, while peasant farms of 62 acres of usable land could employ 24 persons on every 250 acres. Peasant farms had the added advantage of being able to absorb 30 per cent more artisans than could the large estates.

³⁴ Hartwich, op. cit.

Meyer sketched an ideal agricultural structure for the 'new German East.' Peasant farms of 50 to 300 acres would constitute two-thirds of the number of agricultural holdings and three-fourths of the agriculturally utilized land. The average size of a farm would be 50 to 100 acres, and for every 6 or 7 such farms there would have to be one large estate.³⁵ The picture corresponds completely with the decree of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism, dated 26 November 1940, which stated that 'a peasant family possessing from 50 to 100 acres will be the basis of the future agricultural system, while farms of 100 to 300 acres will also be established.'³⁶

As it worked out in actual practice, however, even the smaller German peasant farm was too large and too hard to cultivate for the greater part of the peasants transferred from the Slavic East. With the exception of the Baltic Germans, the peasants from Eastern Europe, who settled in the former Western Poland, were described even by Reich publicists as 'backward and lousy.'³⁷ Blohm reported that the Germans resettled in the Warthegau came from countries in which the cultural conditions of agricultural communities were generally inferior.³⁸ Many of them were put through a course in advanced methods of agricultural economy,³⁹ but the cultural level of the bulk of the rural settlers remained very low and retarded.

The *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 8 December 1940 described a visit to a resettled German farmer from the East:

'Well, Kamerad, how are you getting on?' asked the local peasant leader. The peasant greeted us and said that things were improving but that he had too much land. 'Too much land,' he added

³⁵ Konrad Meyer, 'Neues Landvolk—Verwirklichung im neuen Osten,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, March 1941, pp. 93-8.

³⁶ 'Ansiedlung von Wehrmachtangehörigen in den neuen Ostgebieten,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 3 July 1941, p. 790.

³⁷ Józef Winiewicz, 'Results of Germanisation in Poland,' in *Free Europe*, 19 September 1941, p. 192.

³⁸ Blohm, op. cit. pp. 11-14.

³⁹ Winiewicz, op. cit. p. 192.

and looked helplessly into the distance. 'What? Sixty acres are too much for you? But you have enough horses, and grown-up sons and a wife to help you.' In the stables the peasant leader, to his surprise, saw only two horses and instead of eight cows, only two. When he got to the pigsty he found only two sows and four sucklings. 'What have you done with the rest of your livestock?' he inquired. 'Those,' the peasant replied sullenly. 'Well, I got rid of them. There back in the East we never had more, neither my father, nor my grandfather, but we had enough to feed the family.'

XX

Germanization of the Towns

I

IN attempting to realize two of its basic conceptions regarding the annexed Polish territory—that of providing a rich source of agricultural products for the Reich and that of Germanizing the incorporated provinces—the Reich found itself faced with irreconcilable issues. If it insisted on a purely agricultural development of these provinces, not even on the basis of reduced farm holdings could a population density sufficient for the Germanization of the area be achieved.

By December 1940, the influential *Deutsche Volkswirt* had reached this conclusion and stated flatly that it would be necessary to promote the industrialization of the eastern areas.¹ By the following spring this view had apparently been adopted by the Reich leaders. According to Konrad Meyer,

the common opinion that the eastern regions are to be built up as purely agricultural areas must be rejected, for a purely agricultural area is capable of sustaining a population of only 40 to 50 inhabitants per square kilometer [0.39 square miles], which by no means corresponds to the population policy of the Reich. Therefore, a 'mixed' agrarian-industrial economic structure should be built up in the newly acquired eastern provinces, similar to the economically soundest provinces of the Reich, for example, Hannover. Only 33 1/3 per cent of the population must devote themselves to agriculture, 34 to 40 per cent to trade, 10 to 15 per cent to commerce and communications, and about 10 per cent to public service and other professions. In principle, each peasant should be able to feed four townsmen.

¹ 'Anreiz zur Ostwanderung,' in *Der Deutsche Volkswirt*, 13 December 1940.

The tendency to shift the emphasis somewhat from agricultural development to the industrial potentialities of the incorporated provinces gained strength among the persons responsible for colonizing the 'new German East.' While Gauleiter Greiser continued to speak of the Warthegau as the 'granary of the Reich,' he developed concurrently a detailed plan for strengthening the industrial output in his Gau, focusing attention especially on the creation of high-yield industries, like cellulose plants, the agricultural machinery industry, the textile industry in Lodz, the lignite mines and heavy industry in Poznan.² In Danzig-West Prussia, Gauleiter Forster pursued the same line.³

The intensive industrialization of the incorporated provinces was carried out in the same way as was the Germanization of the soil, through wholesale expropriation of Polish and Jewish concerns. During the first months following the incorporation, the German authorities found it unnecessary to provide any legal basis for the expropriation of the Polish and Jewish property. By deporting the owners of real estate, industrial and commercial undertakings, and other enterprises, the Germans created a *de facto* situation that justified seizure of the abandoned property and its administration by Germans. In many cases, they did not even bother to use such indirect methods, and the seizures took the form of outright confiscation. This fate befell all institutions and undertakings whose activities the Germans described as *deutschfeindlich* (inimical to Germanism).⁴ It was not possible, however, to deport all owners of real estate and commercial or other undertakings, or to seize their property on charges of anti-German activity. Other methods were therefore applied.

In the very first weeks of German rule, German administrators, acting under the general direction of the HTO, were introduced

² *Vierjahresplan*, 20 April 1941.

³ *Ibid.* 20 April 1941.

⁴ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 259.

into not only all the larger commercial and industrial enterprises but even into the establishments of small craftsmen. These administrators removed the original owners from the direction of their businesses. This procedure was tantamount to confiscation, for, according to Polish sources, there was not a single instance of compensation paid for Polish or Jewish property seized in the towns.⁵

Throughout the incorporated region, the Germans confiscated more than 35,000 industrial concerns.⁶ The *Treuhandstelle Posen* (Poznan) seized 3,500 industrial undertakings; the *Treuhandstelle Litzmannstadt* (Lodz) seized 2,000 textile factories alone and 800 other industrial enterprises.⁷ According to official German statistics, the HTO was administering, in February 1941, 264 large and 9,000 medium-sized industrial enterprises.⁸ These figures do not give a complete picture of all the industrial property taken from Polish owners, for many enterprises that were originally administered by trustees were later transferred to German ownership and in February 1941 were no longer subject to the HTO. The administrators frequently acquired the businesses under their control by compelling the owners to hand over the majority shares. In his speech on the second anniversary of the Warthegau's creation, Gauleiter Greiser announced that by October 1941 in Warthegau alone 900 industrial enterprises had been wholly transferred to German ownership, while 1,848 others were being administered by German trustees.⁹

Gauwirtschaftsberater Batzer gave the following figures on the distribution of the industrial plants operating in the Warthegau and on the number of workers employed:¹⁰

⁵ Ibid. p. 260.

⁶ Ibid. p. 261.

⁷ Paul Batzer, 'Wirtschaftsausbau in Warthegau,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 October 1941, p. 1120.

⁸ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 261.

⁹ *Polish News Bulletin*, 31 October 1941.

¹⁰ Batzer, op. cit. p. 1120.

Posen (Poznan) district.....	753 enterprises
Hohensalza (Inowroclaw) district.....	338 "
Litzmannstadt (Łódź) district.....	733 "

TOTAL..... 1,824 "

	<i>April 1940</i>	<i>April 1941</i>
Posen (Poznan) district.....	24,285 workers	60,390 workers
Hohensalza (Inowroclaw) district.....	14,209 "	20,796 "
Litzmannstadt (Łódź) district	51,169 "	87,143 "
TOTAL.....	89,663 "	168,329 "

Whereas the task of Germanizing the soil was entirely and exclusively connected with the resettlement of the German minorities transferred from abroad, the Germanizing of the towns was a different matter. The transferred groups had an overwhelming peasant majority, which furnished more than 300,-000 agriculturally trained persons for the creation of the mighty German peasant wall in the East. This was extremely fortunate, since the Reich could not have furnished even a small number of peasant families for colonization purposes.

When it came to the task of Germanizing the towns, there was no such wealth of appropriate human material among the resettlers. Only the Baltic Germans were predominantly urban and were qualified to fill a part of the vacuum created by the mass deportation of Polish and Jewish townsmen. All other German resettler groups were extremely poor in industrialists, skilled workers, artisans, tradesmen, and the like. It was clear from the very beginning that the resettlers alone would never accomplish the Germanization of industry, handicraft, and commerce in the newly acquired areas. A major role was therefore assigned to the *Volksdeutsche* and to settlers from the Old Reich. The Germanization was thus rendered a combined operation in which resettlers from abroad, *Volksdeutsche*, and *Reichsdeutsche* par-

ticipated, but inasmuch as their activity was so inextricably interrelated, its inclusion in this study devoted to the transfer and resettlement of the German minorities from abroad is essential.

II

Special attention was paid by the Germans to Lodz, the center of the Polish textile industry. In a speech on 11 April 1940, at a celebration of the city's renaming as Litzmannstadt, Greiser declared: 'All efforts are directed to the following goal: to establish this large eastern city of the Reich as the bulwark of Germanism and an important industrial center of the Warthegau.'¹¹

German economic policy with regard to Lodz tried to follow two contradictory lines. One was inspired by the desire to liquidate the city as a textile center. The Secretary of State in the Reich Ministry of Economic Affairs frankly stated in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*:

With a view to safeguarding the employment of German nationals and of maintaining this [textile] industry at an appropriate level, part of the Lodz factories have been closed down, and the others with a total of some 580,000 cotton and some 200,000 wool spindles (in 1938, there were in Lodz 1,600,000 textile spindles and 500,000 spindles in carded and worsted yarn spinning) are being given the opportunity of working more profitably. This arrangement gives equal consideration to economic interests and to the necessity of promoting the interests of Germany as a nation.¹²

The idea was to eliminate Lodz as a textile center by removing its factory installations or scrapping the machinery, and by deporting its workers to other occupations in Germany. Special commissions were established to close down, liquidate, or com-

¹¹ *Der Volksdeutsche*, May 1940.

¹² Evans, *The Nazi New Order in Poland*, p. 102.

bine various enterprises. More than half the textile plants were moved to Germany.¹³ By the end of 1942, about 115,000 workers, mainly skilled textile operators who constituted one of the basic industrial assets of the city, had been deported to the Old Reich for agricultural labor,¹⁴ thereby reducing the textile and clothing industry representation among Lodz workers from 75 to 55 or 60 per cent.¹⁵

This destructive policy, however, could not be carried to its logical conclusion because the German authorities had to take into consideration the interests and claims of the local Lodz *Volksdeutsche* and of the Germans transferred from abroad. The German owners of textile works naturally showed little enthusiasm for the wreckage of Lodz industry in the interests of the Old Reich. Even more recalcitrant were the newcomers, mainly those from the Baltic countries, who had been attracted to Lodz by the promise of quick profit from expropriated Polish and Jewish textile undertakings and other confiscated property handed over to them. Both groups insisted that the economic position of Lodz be strengthened.

The German authorities vacillated between the two pressures, seeking some compromise. They confined their liquidation activities to Polish and Jewish concerns, which constituted the major part of all business undertakings in Lodz. According to the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* of 11 December 1941, some 3,000 out of the 43,000 retail establishments registered by the Lodz Chamber of Commerce were closed down. Of the 3,493 textile works employing over 150,000 workers, that were registered in 1938, only some 300 were left in operation. The *Krakauer*

¹³ 'The Fate of a Polish City,' in *Polish Fortnightly Review*, 15 September 1942, pp. 5-6; 'Life in Nazi-Occupied Poland,' in *Poland Fights*, 24 October 1942, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 12 December 1942.

¹⁵ Karl Weber, 'Litzmannstadt [Lodz]—Geschichte und Probleme eines Wirtschaftszentrum im deutschen Osten,' in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 13 December 1942.

Zeitung of 13 June 1941 reported that both the textile plants and the retail establishments left in operation had either belonged to Germans before the war or had been taken over by Germans transferred from abroad.

The importance of Lodz as an industrial center retained only a faint glimmer of its former greatness. Its industry, in so far as it was allowed to function, was almost completely German-owned. According to the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* of 7 December 1941, 'whereas before the beginning of the Polish campaign only 14 per cent of all the industrial works were in German hands, today the owners or trustee managers were exclusively German.' Polish sources emphasize, however, that the enforced Germanization of the ownership was not followed by Germanization of the industry itself. After three years of occupation and despite all the deportations, there were still some 400,000 Poles in Lodz in 1942, and the mills were entirely dependent on Polish hands, foremen, and engineers for their operation.¹⁶

The industries of Polish Upper Silesia were also widely discussed in the German press. Erwin Koch pointed out in the *Kattowitzer Zeitung* of 31 December 1940 that this industrial district must be regarded as a most essential factor in German war economy. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 29 January 1941 asserted that the coal output of Silesian mines was 60 per cent higher at the beginning of 1941 than the prewar production. Polish circles, however, contest this assertion by quoting 'an entirely trustworthy source' to the effect that after a year of German management an increase of only 7.5 million tons or 20 per cent had been achieved and this with the extension of the working day to ten hours.¹⁷

From the point of view of settling the transferred Germans, these more or less considerable German industrial achievements were of minor importance. In Cieszyn and Upper Silesia only

¹⁶ 'The Fate of a Polish City' (cited above), p. 8.

¹⁷ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 309.

the key industrial positions were cleared of Poles and taken over by Germans; the local workers, highly skilled in their tasks in the mines, iron foundries, and factories, were found to be absolutely indispensable to the continued operation and sustained output of the industrial establishments.¹⁸ The number of German repatriates re-established in industry was therefore relatively very small, and remained in proportion to the low percentage of industrial workers among the transferred Germans.

III

The German expropriation policy in the incorporated Polish areas proceeded, figuratively speaking, from top to bottom. The first targets of this policy were the larger Polish and Jewish industrial concerns, which by virtue of their size were easier to take over and administer. But shortly thereafter, the German authorities proceeded to expel the Poles and Jews from small economic units. This intensified expropriation coincided with the arrival of Baltic Germans, who were supposed to take over the management of those 'orphaned' small handicraft units. But the extent of the confiscations and the number of 'deserted' handicraft establishments far exceeded the number of artisans available even among the transferred Balts. The proportion of artisans in this group was scarcely 20 per cent—some 2,500 to 3,000 in all. Among the Germans from Wolhynia, Galicia, and the Narew area, the ratio was even smaller; only 16 per cent were engaged in either industry or handicrafts.

When the Germans took over the Polish areas they found about 65,000 handicraft establishments in Warthegau alone; of these only 4,700 belonged to the local *Volksdeutsche* and 35 to *Reichsdeutsche*; the remaining 60,000 were in Polish or Jewish hands. The German authorities immediately closed some 25,000

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 164.

enterprises in this latter group, condemning them as 'not viable' and therefore 'valueless.' There still remained some 35,000 handicraft establishments, of which the *Treuhandstelle Posen* seized 17,300 and the *Treuhandstelle Litzmannstadt* 6,400, removing their Polish and Jewish owners.¹⁹ A similar situation was created in Danzig-West Prussia, where 60,000 handicraft undertakings, mainly Polish and Jewish enterprises, came under the trustee management of the HTO Ost. Only a part of them were re-opened because 33,000 handicraft establishments were considered sufficient for this Gau.²⁰

The negative aspect of the Germans' task was thus accomplished: Polish and Jewish owners of handicraft enterprises were eliminated. To Germanize the undertakings which had been made available proved to be much more difficult.

The transferred German *Volksgruppen* and the local *Volksdeutsche* simply could not provide the number of artisans necessary to take over and to manage even the remaining handicraft establishments, and an alarming discrepancy developed between the number of openings created by the German tactics of elimination and the vocational possibilities of the Germans at hand. To fill this gap in the economic structure of the incorporated provinces, German colonizing organizations were forced to make an appeal to the Old Reich. As early as 10 December 1939, an article in the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* revealed the seriousness of the situation: 'In order to give German character to the skilled trades in the Wartheland, a strong influx of Germans from the Reich is absolutely essential. The call for volunteers has already been sounded and will be repeated. A quick response to this summons is the more desirable, since one cannot expect the necessary changes to be effected merely by the settlement of German artisans transferred from the Baltic.' Particular urgency

¹⁹ Batzer, *op. cit.* p. 1121; *Das Reich*, 18 January 1942.

²⁰ 'Danzig—ein Jahr wieder beim Reich,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, no. 28, 1940.

was placed on the need for bakers, butchers, and building workers. It was stressed that the *Reichsdeutsche*, like the local *Volksdeutsche* and the transferred Balts, would at first be installed as trustees in the undertakings 'deserted' by their owners, preliminary to taking them over completely.

This alluring invitation was apparently not without results. An editorial in the February 1940 issue of *Neues Bauerntum* stated that a sufficient number of artisans had registered for work in the cities.²¹ This assertion is confirmed by Polish sources, which complained 'that even small handicrafts (small-scale businesses as they are) are now almost completely Germanized in the larger towns. Eloquent evidence of this is found in six pages of advertisements in the Christmas 1940 issue of the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, listing 316 firms of small craftsmen, almost exclusively from Poznan.'²² In Lodz, the proportion of German enterprises had risen by the end of 1941 from 10 to 49 per cent.²³

Close study of the German statistics on the actual handicrafts industry in the incorporated provinces indicates certain definite limitations in the alleged Germanization of the towns. Germanization of the handicrafts seems to have been limited to a few large towns. The above-cited editorial in *Neues Bauerntum* openly admits this fact, conceding that in the villages, especially the scattered new German settlements, artisans (mainly shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, building workers, and the like) were still badly needed.²⁴ Other German sources are voluble on this subject. In January 1942, *Das Reich* reported that 4,400 handicraft establishments were being administered by German trustees and managed by the HTO, while 1,100 had been sold to Germans transferred from abroad, local *Volksdeutsche*, and

²¹ 'Dörfliches Handwerk im Aufbau des Ostens,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, February 1940, pp. 42-3.

²² Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 261.

²³ *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 7 December 1941.

²⁴ 'Dörfliches Handwerk . . .' (cited above), pp. 42-3.

Germans from the Reich.²⁵ Only a part of these relatively few new owners and trustees had come from Germany proper.

Altogether, some 5,000 handicraft establishments passed into German hands. The remaining 30,000 or so were left in Polish hands. Jewish handicraft concerns had been expropriated without exception, and were either closed as 'valueless' or they were Germanized. Greiser himself acknowledged in October 1941 that several thousand small handicraft establishments still remained in Polish hands, and glossed over the situation by remarking that '2,000 of them have been set aside to be taken over at some future time by German front-line soldiers.'²⁶

IV

The number of commercial undertakings that the Germans found in the incorporated provinces was estimated by the Dresdner Bank early in 1941 at 60,000 to 80,000. In shaping its economic policy for these enterprises, the Reich had a dual task: the first consisted of a purely mechanical supervision of goods transported during the transition period; the second was a fundamental reorganization of a supply region where hardly anything complied with German requirements. Only 10,000 to 20,000 of the undertakings, at the most, were in a condition to be maintained as German enterprises. To cope with this situation, the *Reichsgruppe Handel* and the *Treuhandstelle Ost* created the *Handelsaufbaugesellschaft*²⁷ (Society for the Development of Commerce).

Procedure and achievement varied in the different Gaus. The *Treuhandstelle Posen* had registered 17,200 businesses, the *Treuhandstelle Litzmannstadt*, 7,500, making a total of 24,700 in the

²⁵ *Polish Feature and News Service*, November 1941.

²⁶ *Polish News Bulletin*, 3 October 1941.

²⁷ 'Osthandel als Aufgabe. Statistische Übersicht bearbeitet von der volkswirtschaftlichen Abteilung der Dresdner Bank,' in *Wirtschaftsarchiv*, 31 January 1941.

Warthegau alone. Of these, 15,000 were Polish and Jewish individual enterprises. The majority of these businesses were on a very small scale and, according to German economic planning, they had to be eliminated to make room for German merchants. 'The existing Polish enterprises had to be reduced by about half, in order to divert the clientele to, and secure a means of subsistence for, German retail merchants and make of the retail trade an important factor in German reconstruction work in the Warthegau.'²⁸

This program was largely effectuated. Greiser stated that while before the war there were 15,000 Polish commercial firms in the Wartheland area, only 10,500 were left in 1941; a further 2,500 were to be eliminated, leaving 8,000; of these, 6,000 were to be German firms, and only 2,000 were to be left in Polish hands. (Jewish commercial firms were confiscated without exception.) Greiser added that 923 commercial firms had been completely transferred to German ownership, while another 2,850 were being administered by German trustees.²⁹ The *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* of 7 December 1941 stated with pride that in Lodz, by the end of 1941, the relation of German to non-German trade enterprises had been exactly reversed: in 1939 only 10 per cent were German, while by the end of 1941 only 10 per cent were non-German.

By the admission of the Dresdner Bank, matters were far more complicated in Upper Silesia, where 'Germanization could not be brought to such an advanced point.' To begin with, 1,000 businesses were selected, equipped, and reserved for front-line soldiers. With what was perhaps unconscious candor, the bank emphasized that these commercial undertakings were 'still working under the trusteeship of the company with their old owners, since it is intended to give over to the future [German] appli-

²⁸ Batzer, op. cit. p. 1121.

²⁹ *Polish News Bulletin*, 31 October 1941.

cants not only a well-established business, but also a corresponding clientele.'

Three months later, this same source quoted the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 14 March 1941, reporting on the achievements of the Germanization policy with regard to Gau East Prussia. 'A large number of Polish and Jewish businesses could be closed down gradually, since in all German regional cities and in 50 other localities, German retail businesses in all vital branches are being set up according to plan: as of 31 December 1940, 216 retail enterprises had been established. . . Half of these businesses are managed by local *Volksdeutsche*, while the other half have *Reichsdeutsche* owners.' Resettlers are not even mentioned.

In Danzig-West Prussia, only 21,000 commercial enterprises were left, whereas the actual need was estimated at 33,000 enterprises. Among these there were 600 large commercial houses, 1,000 retail businesses, 350 agency enterprises, and 12,000 itinerant undertakings.⁸⁰

v

In general, German policy with regard to the organization of commercial activities in the incorporated areas was that of protecting medium-sized and smaller businesses owned by individuals, and of opposing the creation of large commercial houses owned by limited companies. In particular, the large trading combines with headquarters in Berlin or central Germany were not allowed to open branches in the area. The confiscated commercial undertakings, in so far as they had not been transferred to new German owners, were administered by the *Auffangsgesellschaft für Kriegsteilnehmerbetriebe*, a special organization acting on behalf of front-line soldiers who were to be settled in the Warthegau after the war.⁸¹

⁸⁰ 'Danzig—ein Jahr . . .' (cited above).

⁸¹ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 November 1941.

The first level of Germanization, in commerce as well as in industry, was the management of the confiscated enterprises by German trustees. But any difference between this management and actual German ownership vanished speedily. The authors of *The New German Order in Poland* state that a study of the German press of the incorporated areas reveals a significant change in the content and character of commercial advertisements between the beginning and end of 1940. At first the firm names were printed in large letters in Polish spelling while the trustees' names appeared in modest print. By the end of the year this situation was reversed, with the name of administrator appearing first. It became more and more frequent to find the names of German firms without any reference to the former Polish names, which indicated that the Germans had taken full possession.³²

A trustee could sell the enterprise at his own price, obtain credits, incur liabilities, and, in general, act as if it were his own property. He possessed all the rights of ownership and none of its obligations. A regulation of 14 February 1941, however, limited the trustees' power in many directions and required the previous consent of the HTO for any change of ownership, for the calling of shareholders' meetings, for the sale of shares, for the incurring of debt, and for the joining of cartels. 'This drastic centralization of responsibility,' reported Jon Evans, 'is a clear indication of the extent to which trustees have been abusing their positions.'³³

There are also indications in German sources that the trustee system gave rise to doubts and criticism among certain influential German circles. *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, in a detailed survey of the first year of German management in the incorporated Polish territories, stated that 'it is questionable whether the trustee principle should go on being observed strictly for a long

³² Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 261.

³³ Evans, op. cit. pp. 88-9.

time.’³⁴ A communique from the HTO in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 21 December 1940 stated categorically that the aim of this institution was ‘the assignment of the undertakings as soon as possible to responsible owners.’ A year later, a summary of the report on two years’ activity by the HTO, published in the same newspaper on 1 November 1941, informed the readers that during this period a large number of enterprises for which it had acted as trustee had been sold at ‘advantageous prices’ to *Volksdeutsche* in Poland or to Germans from the Baltic or the Reich.

German sources are not very informative on the conditions under which the Polish and Jewish commercial undertakings were taken over by the German trustees and ‘sold’ to new German owners. The Germans transferred from abroad apparently received their businesses in compensation for the property they abandoned in the country of their origin. Reich Germans, however, had to pay for theirs. Evans reported (unfortunately without citing his sources) that operators of 76 shops administered by trustees and of 34 shops leased to Germans in the Warthegau were paying the government some 85,000 reichsmarks a year, in addition to the 442,000 reichsmarks they had originally paid for stock and equipment; the sale of 12 other shops brought in 54,000 reichsmarks.³⁵ Clearly, these sums represented but a fraction of the real value of the undertakings ‘leased’ or ‘sold’; they were being offered to Germans at about 20 per cent of their inventory value.³⁶ Seekers after bargains of this kind were naturally numerous, and by the end of November 1942 the *Essener National Zeitung* triumphantly stated that ‘all Polish (and Jewish) trade in the incorporated area has been “liquidated.”’ By that time, 51 per cent of all businesses were in the hands of local

³⁴ ‘Der deutsche Osten nach einem Jahr,’ in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, 1 September 1940, p. 753.

³⁵ Evans, *op. cit.* p. 86.

³⁶ *News Bulletin on Eastern European Affairs*, 22 March 1941.

Volksdeutsche, 8 per cent were in the hands of Germans from the Old Reich, and 20 per cent were controlled by Germans, who had been transferred from the Eastern European countries; the remaining 1,200 enterprises were being run by administrators pending their final disposition.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Quoted from Overseas News Agency dispatch from Zürich, 1 December 1942.

XXI

Resettlement of the Balts

I

THE resettlement of the first German minority group to be repatriated—some 61,500 Balts—posed for the Reich a particularly complicated task. The crux of the difficulty was touched on just after the start of the Baltic evacuation by the Berlin correspondent of the Amsterdam *Telegraaf*, who noted that the overwhelming majority of Baltic Germans belonged to the intellectual classes and could not simply be transplanted to the former Polish Corridor and treated as peasants.¹

Indeed, from the point of view of Reich colonization policy, the whole social and economic composition of the group of repatriated Balts presented a complex problem.² The percentage of old people was exceptionally high, with persons over 65 constituting 14.1 per cent of the Estonian evacuees and 10.3 per cent of the Latvian, as compared with 7.9 per cent in Germany. Children under 14, on the other hand, comprised only 15.2 per cent of the Estonian group and 18.4 of the Latvian, while in Germany the corresponding percentage was 21.4. The Balts also included a high proportion of women—1,276 to 1,000 men; in Germany, the proportion was 1,000 women to 1,053 men. With only 48.8 per cent of the group economically active, the

¹ *Telegraaf*, 10 October 1939.

² See 'Altersaufbau und Berufsgliederung der volksdeutschen Umsiedler aus Lettland, Estland, Volhynien, Galizien, dem Narewgebiet und dem Osten des Generalgouvernements,' in *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1 January 1941; Tornau, 'Die Alters- und Berufsschichtung der volksdeutschen Umsiedler,' in *Nation und Staat*, March 1941; W. Gradmann, 'Die umgesiedelten deutschen Volksgruppen,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, May 1941.

proportion of persons with independent means, *rentiers*, inmates of institutions for the aged, and those receiving financial assistance was unusually large—10.4 per cent as compared with 8.9 in Germany. Of all the repatriated German groups, the Balts had the lowest percentage engaged in agriculture (20.7), but the highest percentage in industry (30.5), trade (31.6), and public service (16.1).

Nevertheless, despite the serious obstacles inherent in the re-establishment of this predominantly urban group with its highly specialized occupational training, within six months after its repatriation, Heinrich Himmler was able to state that 'the installation of the Balts progressed quickly.'³ And this was not an expression of the usual official optimism. The specific circumstances artificially created by the German authorities in the incorporated Polish territories enabled Himmler's resettlement machinery to produce this 'miraculous achievement.'

The resettlement of the Baltic Germans merits a careful analysis, independent of the installation of all other transferred German groups, for several reasons. In the first place, the Balts were the only group to be resettled in the incorporated Polish provinces immediately after their arrival there, without having to go through the intermediate stage of residence in camps situated in the Old Reich. Leaving the ships that brought them from Estonia and Latvia, they were forthwith directed to towns, villages, or temporary camps in the incorporated provinces, where they remained until their final settlement. Their colonization therefore presents a continuity in time and space. Furthermore, the resettlement of the Balts had a special character in that it involved a group that was 80 per cent urban, while the settlement of all subsequently transferred German minorities was substantially a rural problem. And lastly, the colonization was a speedily concluded project, achieved within the amazingly short

³ *Reichsverwaltungsblatt*, 8 June 1940.

period of some six months—from November 1939 to May 1940—while the settlement of all the other groups took years. On the whole, the resettlement of the Baltic Germans can be considered the only fully realized German colonization experiment.

II

The ships carrying the evacuated Baltic Germans were directed to the ports of Danzig, Gdynia, Stettin, and Swinemünde.⁴ Each ship brought from 1,000 to 2,000 immigrants and from 5,000 to 10,000 pieces of luggage. To organize the reception of so many persons was in itself no easy matter, but from all accounts it was more than satisfactorily arranged.

On leaving the ships, the evacuees found their first meal in the new homeland already prepared by the NSV. The food was served by members of the women's and youth organizations. Immediately after eating, the immigrants and their luggage were transported to the trains awaiting them.

The matter of transportation was handled by the party organization, *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy), which apparently functioned with great efficiency. An Estonian German, who arrived in Stettin on the third ship from Tallinn, commented enthusiastically on his reception: 'Again we had an opportunity to admire the organization. 1,100 Baltic Germans arrived on this ship, and within two hours, 700 of them were already aboard a special train proceeding toward Poznan.'⁵

The first arrivals were sent directly to Poznan, where they were promptly accommodated, but the rapidly increasing number of evacuees forced the German authorities to alter their original plan and to give temporary shelter to the Balts in private houses or at assembly camps in Pomerania. The majority

⁴ *Baltenbriefe zur Rückkehr ins Reich*, p. 58; *Latvian Monthly Bulletin*, January 1940, pp. 2-3.

⁵ *Baltenbriefe*, pp. 47-8.

of such camps were established in the districts of Pasewalk, Greifenhagen, Pyritz, Naugard, Taminin, and Greifswald. Sick persons were lodged at the Baltic watering places of Heringsdorf, Ahlbeck, and others, where hotels, casinos, and boarding houses were put at their disposal. Shelter and food were provided gratis for the repatriates.⁶ At these resting places they awaited the further orders of the EWZ at Poznan.

Inasmuch as the evacuees had been permitted to bring with them small amounts of Estonian and Latvian currency, special exchange offices were set up at the ports of arrival to enable them to convert their funds to reichsmarks at a favorable rate. Another form of financial aid to the evacuated Balts was reported by the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 18 January 1940. After the liquidation of the assembly camps with their collective feeding, every Balt who had not yet found work or was unfit for work was entitled to a weekly or monthly allowance which should not exceed his last salary or income in Estonia or Latvia; if his previous salary or income was insufficient to maintain his normal standard of living, he was entitled, for the period of four months, to an additional sum covering the difference.

Before the departure from their Baltic homeland, the repatriates had deposited the proceeds from the sale of their possessions and all other cash in a special clearing account set up between the Reich and Latvia or Estonia. The advances granted to the repatriates for the establishment of their new households were calculated on the basis of the amounts they had left in the countries of their former residence. They received, in addition, credits for the creation of new business enterprises. The sums charged to the liquidation account were figured at a favorable rate of exchange: 60 reichsmarks for 100 lats, or 80 reichsmarks for 100 Estonian kroons. The interest charged for these credits exceeded the normal Reichsbank discount by only 1 per cent.

⁶ *Baltenbriefe*, pp. 58, 60, 62.

The Baltic Germans left Estonia and Latvia as stateless persons. A prerequisite for their resettlement in the Reich was, of course, their naturalization. The German-Latvian treaty of 30 October 1939 and, although not so explicitly, the German-Estonian protocol of 15 October contained the unconditional obligation on the part of the Reich to grant citizenship to all the former Estonian and Latvian nationals who left these countries and lost their citizenship by virtue of these treaties. In practice, however, the naturalization offices established by the Reich were far from being rubber-stamping agencies. The procedure of granting naturalization was highly complicated and extremely cautious, and apparently not all the new arrivals were granted Reich citizenship. According to the Berlin correspondent of the *New York Times*, a preliminary decision was made whether the applicant could receive German papers immediately after the final examination. Germans report that such decisions were generally in the affirmative. Rejected applicants were required to seek citizenship through the regular channels.⁷

III

The housing of the repatriates constituted a special problem. As described in earlier chapters, the German authorities largely provided for this need by deporting tens of thousands of Poles and Jews from the towns and obliging them to leave their houses and apartments completely furnished. Thus the first evacuees from Estonia and Latvia found excellent accommodations. The Estonian Germans were quartered mainly in Adlerhorst, a sea-side resort near Danzig, which by the end of October was almost entirely filled. The Latvian Germans were located mainly in Gdynia, only recently recovered from the ravages of war, and in Poznan and Bydgoszcz, where they found exceptionally pleasant dwellings.

⁷ *New York Times*, 21 November 1939.

Not wholly satisfied with the condition of all the confiscated Polish and Jewish homes, the NSV took charge of these dwellings and prepared them to meet the living standards of the incoming Germans. Reporting on such activities, Edmund Beyl cites the case of Adlerhorst where members of the NSV and of the *National Sozialistische Frauenschaft* 'first cleaned up the apartments left by the Poles in an indescribably bad state and made them habitable; then put in window glass, procured various kitchen utensils and fuel, supplied furniture and beds.'⁸

It is quite understandable that the heirs to these stolen apartments were charmed with their new surroundings. Numerous contributors to the *Baltenbriefe* were ecstatic in enumerating all the delights of their new dwellings. One mother wrote to her daughter from Adlerhorst:

We expected collective lodgings, but all were placed in private apartments. We were very fortunate and were lodged in the very clean apartment of a rich businessman, with brand-new furniture. It was extremely well furnished—everything down to the smallest detail—dishes, crystal, complete kitchen equipment, food stores, snow-white bed linen, beds already made and overflowing with quilts, pillows, and cushions. The apartment has three rooms, kitchen, W.C., bathroom, basement, with an abundance of electric light, a garden with unpicked vegetables, a dog, rabbits, and chickens—everything at our disposal.⁹

A physician's wife reported from Poznan: 'We feel very much at home here; a very large and beautiful apartment with a doctor's office was assigned to us by the Chamber of Physicians. The furniture and all the equipment are in good taste.'¹⁰

Describing the reactions of these *nouveaux riches*, Wythe Williams wrote:

⁸ Beyl, 'Sociale Probleme im deutschen Osten,' in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, January 1941, p. 27.

⁹ *Baltenbriefe*, p. 58.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 60.

An occasional Balt was quite pleased by the well-stocked wine cellar or some other luxury to which he had been unaccustomed in his middle-class existence in Libau [Liepāja], or Mittau [Jelgava], but which was his to enjoy in the conquered Posen [Poznań] or Bromberg [Bydgoszcz]. On the other hand, being middle-class, and therefore property-respecting and otherwise sentimental, many a Balt felt conscience-stricken in moving into luxury or even mere comfort not belonging to him.¹¹

Apparently in an effort to ease the troubled consciences of the more sensitive and scrupulous elements among the repatriated Balts, the German authorities tried to convince them that all the deported former owners of the dwellings and property given to them had received adequate compensation.¹² The newcomers could then, presumably, enjoy the homes and furnishings and personal belongings of the absent owners with the assurance of the full legitimacy of their possession.

'They are firmly of the belief,' wrote the Polish author of a report on the first period of deportation in Western Poland, 'that the Nazi government has paid the Poles the value of their own former dwellings, undertakings and lands from the money remitted to the Reich Treasury by the governments of Latvia and Estonia as equivalent of the value of their estates and undertakings in these countries.'¹³ In other cases, the newcomers were told that they had been given unclaimed property or property whose owners were not known. When a correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* asked one of the German families transferred from the Baltic states what had happened to the former owners, he was told: 'They are dead or have run away.'¹⁴

It was, of course, not possible to provide equally comfortable apartments for all the thousands of immigrants; not every de-

¹¹ Williams, *Riddle of the Reich*, p. 178.

¹² Polish Information Center, *Documents Relating to the Administration of Occupied Countries in Eastern Europe*.

¹³ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 176.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 205.

ported Pole or Jew left behind what was deemed an adequate dwelling. The old rule, 'First come, first served,' governed the situation. Those Baltic Germans who came in the later groups did not always get apartments so conveniently arranged; many of them were given poor or devastated dwellings from which the corpses of their Polish tenants had not even been removed, and sometimes an entire large family was squeezed into a single small room.¹⁵ Some of the repatriates got no apartments of their own at all, but were located temporarily in camps. Others could not be placed in large towns like Gdynia, Poznan, or Bydgoszcz, and had to be satisfied with quarters in small towns or villages where there was no hope of finding the comforts to which they were accustomed.

An admission of this drearier aspect of the resettlement may be found in an article which appeared on 8 December 1939 in the *Rigasche Rundschau*, an ardent supporter of the evacuation. After noting the enthusiastic letters received from the first repatriated Balts, the article continues: 'We must naturally be aware of the fact that not everyone can be lodged immediately in a count's palace, and that not everyone is able to find accommodation in larger or smaller cities. A certain number must move to the country and villages. Obviously, the country cannot offer all the comfort we have in the cities.'

IV

In accordance with both a basic principle of the Reich resettlement policy and the promises given to the Balts before their evacuation, they were, as a rule, settled in compact communities. Hans Krieg, official historian of the Baltic evacuation, emphasizes that 'the tendency was to transfer entire Baltic communities and to resettle them as separate communities in the new

¹⁵ Williams, *op. cit.* p. 179.

settlement area, conforming to living and working conditions to which the repatriates were accustomed.'¹⁶

Official German sources state that in May 1940, six months after the beginning of the evacuation, about 61,500 Germans from Latvia and Estonia were already installed in the annexed Polish provinces—about 50,655 in Warthegau, and 11,000 in Danzig-West Prussia.¹⁷ The geographical distribution of the Balts in the various districts of Danzig-West Prussia was never revealed. Of the 50,655 Balts settled in the Warthegau, there were 12,682 in the Inowroclaw area, 27,613 in Poznan province, and 10,360 in the Lodz district.¹⁸ More than two-thirds of the resettled Balts remained in the towns. According to a statement made in June 1940 by Heinrich Himmler, they were distributed as follows: 29,000 in Poznan; 8,800 in Lodz; 2,800 in Gdynia; 2,000 in Kalisz; 1,800 in Bydgoszcz; 1,700 in Gniezno; 1,300 in Plock; 1,200 in Leszno; 1,200 in Inowroclaw.¹⁹ Smaller groups were settled in smaller towns of the former Middle Poland.

The economic settlement of these townsmen did not present any widespread difficulties because of the thorough 'preparation' on the part of the Reich. Describing the schedule of deportations, *The German New Order in Poland* emphasized that though 'in practice everybody was deported from the towns and villages, whether rich or poor, intellectuals, workers or peasants, special attention during the first few weeks was given to the intellectuals.'²⁰ Thus the Germans created 'living space' for the vanguard of the 'returning Germandom from abroad,' the Baltic Germans with their specific economic structure. Among the evacuees, 88 per cent of the Latvian Germans and 80 per cent of the Estonian were townsmen. Persons with professional training

¹⁶ Krieg, *Baltischer Aufbruch zum Deutschen Osten*, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Reichsverwaltungsblatt*, 8 June 1940.

¹⁸ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 17 May 1940.

¹⁹ *Reichsverwaltungsblatt*, 8 June 1940.

²⁰ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 16.

were most strongly represented: 270 physicians, 270 teachers, 256 lawyers and judges, 55 university professors, 370 pharmaceutical chemists, 100 dentists, 700 nurses. The simplest means of preparing occupational opportunities for these persons was the expulsion of the corresponding Polish and Jewish elements from their positions.

Witnesses of the ruthless uprooting of the Poles and Jews were many. In his second report to Pope Pius XII, the Primate of Poland, His Eminence Cardinal Hlond, stated that in the Diocese of Chelmno, 'all Polish intellectuals have been either shot or deported.' 'In Lodz,' reported another observer, 'deportations of Polish intellectuals and of Jews are being carried out on a large scale; they are deported according to their occupations: barristers, judges, doctors, public prosecutors and officials.' On 15 January 1940, some 1,400 families in these categories were expelled from their houses.²¹ Cardinal Hlond certified in February 1940 that 'at the present moment in Katowice and other towns of Polish Silesia there are no Polish lawyers, doctors, engineers, or schoolmasters.'²² In January 1941, the Berlin correspondent of the Helsinki *Hufvudstadsbladet* reported to his journal from Poznan that 'representatives of the Polish intellectual classes have disappeared to the last man.'²³

In such circumstances, it was not impossible to settle thousands of Baltic Germans without delay. When the former holders of professional positions were evicted literally overnight, the needs of the population they had served remained essentially unchanged. Moreover, the new German administration urgently needed thousands of qualified persons to staff its numerous offices. 'Engineers, physicians, and teachers were welcomed in the newly created Reichsgaus, and from the very first day of their arrival they found work in their professions,' Edmund Beyl

²¹ Ibid. pp. 170, 190, 191.

²² Ibid. p. 171.

²³ Ibid. p. 198.

reported.²⁴ All the registered lawyers found work. Although the number of registered teachers was only 270, 500 persons were employed in this capacity. Of the 370 pharmaceutical chemists, however, only 200 were given employment. In addition, 190 engineers, 16 architects, 45 university lecturers, and 67 foresters were easily settled, mainly in the Warthegau.²⁵ A great number of the Balts became functionaries and employees in government offices, 2,000 of them at the Reichspost in Warthegau alone.²⁶ In Lodz, the Germanized municipality absorbed 400 officials.²⁷

There were, however, according to all indications, a number of repatriated Baltic Germans who were subjected to a long period of uncertainty about their vocational future while they waited in assembly camps for their final resettlement. And not all the transferred Balts succeeded in finding work consistent with their previous professional training and abilities. This was particularly true of certain highly qualified persons in the older age groups, many of whom suffered social and economic degradation. Physicians with wide experience could not find work because they were considered too old. Pastors who had formerly administered large and rich parishes were appointed cemetery guards. A well-known 80-year-old publisher, who had directed twelve publishing houses of his own, was happy to get a job as a house guard.²⁸

The Tallinn correspondent of the Paris *Temps* reported that unemployment among the transferred Balts was widespread, and that persons who succeeded in finding work were compelled to turn to fields far removed from their previous specialty. The German officials were giving educated persons the most burden-

²⁴ Beyl, op. cit. p. 28.

²⁵ Gerlach, *Auf neuer Scholle*, p. 13.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 19.

²⁷ 'Der Balteneinsatz in Lodz,' in *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 15 February 1940.

²⁸ *The Times*, London, 18 February 1940.

some and thankless tasks—dish-washing in restaurants, street-cleaning, and the like. Women, who only a few months before had belonged to the most elegant society in the Baltic, were doing dirty work in villages.²⁹

Any complaints from the resettlers about this situation were met by the answer: 'The Führer brought you there not in order to make you rich, but to give you the chance to serve the National Socialist state.'³⁰ Hans Krieg undoubtedly expressed the guiding principle of the Reich's colonization policy in the Polish provinces when he stated: 'The offices responsible had no intention of assigning positions to persons who for one reason or another were unfit for them merely because they had formerly occupied such positions. The authorities also had no intention of considering as final each settlement and vocational placement. . . Thus, some men and women were assigned positions which from the first were considered temporary.'³¹

Although persons trained in the liberal professions constituted the largest group among the Baltic urban repatriates, an important sector was composed of industrialists, merchants, and artisans. The re-establishment of these elements followed the usual German pattern; they were given the expropriated Polish and Jewish enterprises. By May 1940, Baltic Germans had been installed in 3,000 industrial or commercial undertakings, and 1,000 artisan workshops.³² A year later, in the Warthegau alone, the number of industrial and commercial ventures taken over by the Balts had reached 4,000; the number of independent workshops, however, had diminished to 700.³³ The value of credits advanced by the Reich for the development of these businesses is discussed in an earlier chapter.

It was made quite clear at the start of the resettlement that the

²⁹ Quoted in *Posledniya Novosti*, 2 December 1939.

³⁰ Quoted from *Le Temps* in *Posledniya Novosti*, 2 December 1939.

³¹ Krieg, op. cit. p. 35.

³² *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 17 May 1940.

³³ Gerlach, *Auf neuer Scholle*, p. 13.

Reich leaders were primarily interested in the younger generation and that they considered the older people an unavoidable responsibility. The youth were put to work immediately, and although it was frequently heavy and exhausting labor, it nevertheless gave them some satisfaction. All the other age groups became, to a certain extent, the objects of social security. The Danzig correspondent of the *New York Times* reported on 31 October 1939 that 'the burden of the work will rest on the shoulders of the youth among their number. The old people may be cared for by the welfare organizations till their homes are built up.' To this end the NSV created several *Altersheime*. The one at Selwetz an der Weichsel alone gave asylum to more than 600 aged Balts,³⁴ and many of the aged and sick were established at the Baltic resorts of Heringsdorf, Ahlbeck, Bansins, and Misdroy.³⁵

It must be remembered that there were 1,815 evacuees over 65 from Estonia and 4,984 from Latvia, a total of 6,799 persons. The number of persons below 65 but still considered 'too old' was certainly not less. Thus to a considerable degree the older generation of the transferred Balts was thrown into the discard.³⁶

V

That the arrival of the Baltic Germans effected a radical change in the whole aspect of the most important Polish towns is conceded by both German and Polish sources. As early as February 1940, a Polish report noted that in the Warthegau capital 'the Baltic Germans who have been brought to Poznan give the town a peculiar tone and appearance; wearing, as a

³⁴ Beyl, op. cit. p. 28.

³⁵ Ernst C. Helmreich, 'The Return of the Baltic Germans,' in *American Political Science Review*, August 1942, p. 714.

³⁶ A sidelight on the situation is furnished by press reports of numerous suicides among the transferred Balts. See *Posledniya Novosti*, 19 October 1939.

rule, high elk-skin boots and fur caps, they are noisy and arrogant in the streets and public squares. But they are particularly arrogant when they take over the dwellings and undertakings assigned to them after the Polish owners have been deported.’³⁷ Referring also to Poznan, a German author stated: ‘One encounters men and women from the Baltic countries everywhere. . . The hotel owner, the girl at the post-office counter, the salesgirl in a store, the manager in another, the pharmacist across the street, the doctor on the corner, officials and employees in the administration, a number of artisans, editors, trustees in large factories, several teachers—all are Baltic resettlers. . .’³⁸

Although as the administrative and economic center, Poznan was the central point for the Baltic resettlers, it was not the only Polish city to show the Baltic German imprint. Lodz, which sheltered only 7,500 of the resettlers, also testified to its influence. Originally, Lodz had very little appeal for the newcomers, whose sympathies belonged rather to Poznan, Gdynia, and other large cities of Pomorze and Posnania. The German press in the Warthegau had to launch an intensive ‘enlightenment and propaganda campaign’ to combat this negative attitude and to attract the Balts to Lodz. On 15 February 1940, the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* triumphantly announced that ‘the feelings of the Balts have changed in favor of Lodz. The Balts now recognize that there are possibilities in that city. Applications are constantly being made for the transfer of relatives and acquaintances from Pomerania [Pomorze]. Numerous industrialists apply daily.’

VI

German sources are not in full accord on their estimates of the pace of the installation of the Baltic peasants in their new

³⁷ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 176.

³⁸ Gerlach, *Auf neuer Scholle*, p. 19. In 1939, not more than 3 per cent of the population of Poznan were Germans. (Lange, *Ostland kehrt heim*, p. 55.)

homeland. Hans Krieg asserted that it proceeded most rapidly.³⁹ Edmund Beyl, on the other hand, stresses that while artisans, physicians, and teachers found employment almost immediately, it was more difficult to place farmers for whom appropriate farms had first to be found.⁴⁰

Both claims are partially true. Krieg was certainly correct in stating that 'an exceedingly large settlement area with a number of farms far in excess of the available number of settlers is at the disposal of the Baltic German peasants. . .' In these circumstances, the allotment of Polish farms to the Baltic peasants was accomplished with fair speed. The operation of these farms was somewhat more complicated. In order to be able to participate in the planting of 1939-40, the newcomers had to start work immediately. However, they found a great part of their new households in pitiful condition. Many houses were half destroyed, and were often without heat, food, or beds. The confiscated farms were often devoid of livestock. The unavoidable destruction of war was completed by the deliberate wreckage wrought by the escaping or dislodged Polish owners.⁴¹ The Baltic peasants were therefore required to make the most urgent improvements and to prepare the seed and the manure.⁴²

Difficulties of this kind were, however, only transitory and comparatively easy to overcome. Other obstacles of a more objective and more permanent nature proved much more serious. The Baltic farmers came to the Polish western provinces from a climate where heavy rainfall and high humidity were favorable to meadow and pasture. Almost every Baltic farm included a wooded lot; from 50 to 60 per cent of the land was used for pasture, while the rest was given over to clover and cereals. In the new settlement area entirely different conditions prevailed.

³⁹ Krieg, *op. cit.* p. 51.

⁴⁰ Beyl, *op. cit.* p. 28.

⁴¹ Krieg, *op. cit.* pp. 51-2.

⁴² A. von Mickwitz, 'Der Einsatz der baltendeutschen Bauern und Landwirte,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, March 1940, pp. 114-15.

In Warthegau the spring is dry, the summer hot, and meadow and pasture land are rare. In the Baltic countries every peasant farm possessed a fair number of first-class cattle, but in Poland cattle were far from numerous and the quality was low. It was a revelation to the Baltic farmers that horses in the Warthegau could be fed on rye groats.⁴³ Since the resettlers lacked the experience necessary for managing a farm under such unfamiliar conditions, their adjustment was hard and slow, and troublesome errors were inevitable.

On the whole, however, the uprooted Baltic German peasants were glad to get settled and were satisfied with whatever land and house they were granted. At Lodz barrack camp, a repatriated farmer declared frankly: 'Never mind what the soil is—if only I can plow it.' And his wife added, 'I wish to have a home again—no matter how good or bad it is.'⁴⁴

By May 1940, about 2,300 farms of various sizes in the Warthegau and 150 farms in Danzig-West Prussia were being managed by Baltic Germans; a year later, their number in the Warthegau reached 3,000. Approximately a third of the new farmers were formerly large Baltic landowners and their sons; the rest were 'true peasants.'⁴⁵ The Germans stressed the fact that the confiscated Polish estates were distributed among the former Baltic barons with the intention of 'compensating them for the harm done to them by the agrarian reforms in Latvia and Estonia.'⁴⁶ This compensation was truly munificent. In Estonia and Latvia the repatriated Germans possessed about 212,500 acres of land; in their new homeland they were given 358,000 acres.⁴⁷

In accordance with their pledge and in order to avoid the dispersion of the traditional Baltic peasant entity, the colonizing authorities of the Reich concentrated the peasant groups mainly

⁴³ Krieg, op. cit. pp. 51-2.

⁴⁴ *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 21 May 1940.

⁴⁵ Mickwitz, op. cit. p. 115.

⁴⁶ *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 17 May 1940.

⁴⁷ *Neue Volkszeitung*, 11 October 1941.

in the eastern districts of the former Poznan province. Peasants from Kurland were settled in the Schubin district,⁴⁸ and 300 peasant families from Hirschenhof, who wanted to remain together, were established in the Gniezno district.⁴⁹ ,

VII

The role played by the transferred Balts in the Germanization of the incorporated Polish provinces was highly estimated by the German press. Stating that three years after the start of the resettlement work, 'it can now be said that the process of settlement is, in spite of all difficulties, at an end, since the Balts feel at home,' the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 9 January 1943 stressed: 'In the nationality struggle, the Balts furnish valuable support. Thanks to the centuries-old struggle for existence in the Baltic countries where to the end they remained a closely knit German national group, they are accustomed to keeping themselves apart from a foreign nation. . . '

The Balts apparently 'kept themselves apart' not only from the Poles, but also from the other transferred German minorities. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* acknowledged that while 'the various German elements in the Wartheland are beginning to mix sociably, the Baltic German families even now preserve their tradition of a great past. . . '

⁴⁸ Krieg, op. cit. p. 52.

⁴⁹ Mickwitz, op. cit. p. 115.

XXII

Vicissitudes of the German Colonization Policy

I

THE Germans transferred from various countries were explicitly promised that they would be resettled in groups wholly composed of their own countrymen—a promise that undoubtedly played an important role in influencing them to leave their homelands for a new and strange country. Such a policy was of course dictated primarily by expediency. Von Reichert formulated it simply: 'Wherever a settlement is formed, consisting of a large number of farmsteads situated close to one another, it is colonized by a group of resettlers originating from one neighborhood. In such cases, individual peasant families have known each other for a long time; they have the same methods of work, they follow the same habits, and thus form a complete entity.'¹

This kind of settlement was in full accord with the general National Socialist idea. 'The racial evolution in the new Reich areas,' wrote Wilhelm Zoch, 'can be of real value for the German collectivity only if what is formed there is not a mass adventitiously assembled out of heterogeneous units, but a well-organized and internally harmonious stock composed of essentially similar human elements.'² Zoch revealed, however, the apprehension of the German authorities in charge of the resettlement when he admitted that 'the settlement of closed country

¹ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 5 January 1941.

² Zoch, 'Landnahme im Dienste der Volksordnung,' in *Neues Bauern-tum*, December 1940, p. 400.

groups might lead to highly undesirable consequences. The emphasis might be placed with particular insistence on certain special traits and prerogatives whose tendency would be to create separatism instead of unity.' He went on to state the 'synthetic' resettlement formula devised to avert this danger at the very start. 'In choosing the units for settlement, the principle will have to be to make them large enough so that the feeling of common country origin can act as a binding force, but small enough to eliminate particularistic tendencies.'

The resettlement practice of the Reich in the incorporated Polish provinces endeavored to follow this formula. Countrymen from a specific region were settled in small and separate groups. But these groups were scattered all over the 38 counties of the Wartheland. None of the five major repatriated groups was entirely concentrated in any one county or even in several contiguous counties. The transferees from Wolhynia and Galicia, it is true, were settled mainly, though not exclusively, in the eastern districts of Inowroclaw and Lodz, and those from the Government General in the western districts of Poznan; the Germans from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dobruja were, however, evenly distributed over almost the whole of the Wartheland.³ Only two counties received as few as two of the regional groups, three had three, twenty-one had four, and eleven, all five.⁴ Smaller entities such as villages, it is true, were generally settled by members of a single regional group, who thus regained their old familiar human surroundings. The creation of larger, organic territorial entities, however, was consciously avoided.

The resettlement scheme aimed, as Gauleiter Greiser put it, at the amalgamation of all German stocks into a uniform community.⁵ The basic idea was 'to break up all existing associations

³ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 July 1942.

⁴ See map published in *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 11 January 1942.

⁵ Arthur Greiser, 'Grossdeutsche Aufgabe in Wartheland,' in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, January 1941.

and links among the colonists and prevent the formation of "sectarian" local groups.'⁶ On the other hand, as Reich propagandists themselves admitted, the very low cultural level of a great part of the German settlers, especially those from rural districts of Eastern Europe, created painful frictions between them and the German colonists from the Reich and those families who had lived in the western Polish provinces before their annexation by Germany. These latter groups, ambitious and conscious of their social position, kept aloof from the settlers from the East, with whom they had nothing in common. In the Warthegau a special press campaign was conducted to persuade the western Germans to maintain contact with their eastern *Volksgenossen*. Those from the East, however, apparently felt at ease only among their own kind.⁷

This mutual desire for isolation was partly due to differences in language. The newcomers from the East spoke a dialect and were often unfamiliar with standard German. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 3 November 1940 reported that they spoke German inadequately and wrote it indifferently. The *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of 19 November 1940 emphasized that 'a special effort must be made to teach the children to speak German correctly.' As late as February 1943, *Neues Bauerntum* acknowledged that 'tens of thousands of persons of German blood, who had lost their knowledge of the German language, have come to the Wartheland especially . . . and have to learn the German language from the beginning,' while a much larger number, 'have to attend courses in order to have a thorough command of the German language such as is normal for those who have gone through elementary school.'

⁶ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 11 January 1942.

⁷ Józef Winiewicz, 'Results of Germanisation in Poland,' in *Free Europe*, 19 September 1941, p. 193.

II

One of the few unshakable basic principles of German policy in the incorporated areas was the determination to keep the transferred Germans in complete isolation from the indigenous Polish population. This insistence was motivated by two different, even somewhat contradictory, reasons. The first was a peculiar sense of inferiority—the fear of assimilation of the German racial islands by the surrounding and overwhelming Polish majority. In an article in the *Essener National Zeitung* of 24 May 1941, Gauleiter Forster of Danzig-West Prussia bitterly recalled all the Germans who had ‘been overwhelmed and lost through Polish pressure in the course of centuries.’ ‘In order that this tragedy should never be repeated,’ declared Kurt Lück, a high official of the German administration in the Warthegau, ‘National Socialism demands a ruthless separation of the members of the German nation from those of the Polish nation, a separation that admits of no false sentiment.’⁸

The second reason for the German stress on national separatism originated in their firm conviction of German superiority. It was essential that the German master race should avoid any personal contact with the conquered population, in order to maintain its own dignity and its dominant position. Ulrich Greifelt formulated this ‘decisive principle’ as ‘racial separation and racial selection, as well as a strict separation of people of German and foreign blood, which is to be carried out without any compromise.’⁹

The behavior of the local Germans and of those transferred from abroad in this respect was evidently not entirely satisfactory to the authorities. On 2 September 1940, Greiser com-

⁸ Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, p. 140.

⁹ Ulrich Greifelt, ‘Aufgaben der Festigung deutschen Volkstums in den neuen Ostgebieten,’ in *Siedlung und Wirtschaft*, February 1941.

plained that 'the sharp line of separation is being violated in numerous individual cases owing to the close co-existence of the German population in the Reichsgau Wartheland with the Polish population, which today still far outnumbers the German population.' Greiser warned that 'any individuals belonging to the German community who maintain relations with Poles which go beyond the needs arising from economic considerations will be placed under protective arrest. In serious cases . . . he will be transferred to a concentration camp. . .'¹⁰

III

One of the main features of the new order imposed on Poland after the German conquest was the concept of a German master class, and, as a correlative, a modern form of serfdom for the local Polish, not to mention Jewish, population. The highest representatives of the Reich in the incorporated areas frequently gave unequivocal expression to this theory.

The German president of Lodz, Herr Übelhör, declared in a speech on 11 November 1939: 'We are masters. As masters we must behave. The Pole is a servant and must serve us. . .'¹¹ The same spokesman in a radio speech on 2 December 1939 repeated: 'Every Pole is a servant and every Pole must blindly and unhesitatingly carry out any order given to him by a German.' And Greiser declared in a broadcast on 26 August 1940: 'The Pole is the servant of the German and will remain so forever.'¹²

A bit of political instruction on the subject of German policy in the incorporated provinces, distributed in the Reich in 1940 in the form of letters to members of the National Socialist party, made the explicit statement: 'The first law concerning the Ger-

¹⁰ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. pp. 408-9.

¹¹ *Lodzer Zeitung*, 12 November 1939.

¹² Associated Press dispatch from Berlin in *Boston Globe*, 26 August 1940.

man-Polish neighborhood is that the German peasant is superior to the Polish magnate, and the German worker superior to the Polish intellectual.¹³

A German farm paper went so far as to suggest in an editorial that in the annexed Polish territories the former German feudal system should be introduced, whereby each German landowner would be granted a certain amount of land and a number of Polish tenants, from whom he could exact fees, taxes, and produce in exchange for permitting them to live on his soil. The Reich, in turn, would levy taxes on the landowners. In this way, the maximum in labor and produce and revenue could be realized.¹⁴

This master-class psychology, so passionately preached by the leaders of the Reich and so eagerly accepted by many of the German people, promptly proved to be a dangerous double-edged weapon. Many of the local and transferred Germans in the incorporated areas took the doctrine too literally and refused to do any hard work, particularly agricultural labor, on the grounds that such occupations would be unsuitable for members of a master race. They, the masters, were quite willing to take their places on the former Polish estates as landowners or in factories as the head men, but the actual work would have to be done by the subjected Poles.

The fatal results of this literal interpretation of the master theory apparently became perceptible during the first half of 1940. It was one thing for the Germans to behave as masters toward the local Polish and Jewish population, as the Führer intended they should, but the attitude that their master status exempted them from all labor was an unexpected twist to the Reich preachments. The official National Socialist press and leaders promptly inaugurated an active 'enlightenment campaign'

¹³ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. pp. 152-3.

¹⁴ *Deutsche Erde*, 16 June 1941.

in an effort to reconcile the German conception of a master race with the practical need for Germanizing the soil.

The *Nationalsozialistische Landpost* of August 1940 devoted a special article to the 'opinion expressed here and there that in the war the German people showed once and for all that it is destined to be the master, and therefore the German individual is too good to do any heavy labor, as, for instance, agricultural work, mining, and the like; this heavy labor, the advocates of the "master folk theory" assert, should in future be done for us by others, for example, by Poles.' In order to prove the error and the potential danger of this notion, the newspaper quoted Walter Darré, formulator of the master race concept: 'The soil will be mastered by those who till it, and not by those who merely give orders to till it.' The *Landpost* terms these words 'a clear and unequivocal denial' of the dangerous but apparently prevalent distortion of the concept.

German colonization theorists began to take quite a new view of the experience of hundreds of years of German colonizing activities in Eastern and Southeastern Europe and to evaluate that experience more critically. The revised point of view was clearly stated by Anton Reinthaller, Under-Secretary of State in the Reich Ministry of Food: 'Conquests are really valuable only where the conquered land can be colonized by German peasants and tilled, with limited exceptions, exclusively by Germans. Wherever Germans conquered a land but failed to settle their own peasantry—as, for example, in the Baltic states, where the German barons used alien labor—German rule did not last and the conquered land was lost again. Our past teaches us that the plow must follow the sword.'¹⁵

In the same spirit, Alfred Rosenberg, one of the most extreme exponents of German racial superiority doctrines, devoted a special article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* to the topic: 'Any

¹⁵ *Das Reich*, 4 August 1940.

kind of labor done on the German soil is worthy of respect. . . Our goal can never be a *Herrenvolk* in the English sense. We do not wish a Reich built on clay foundations, but a strong and sound Reich of German blood and soil.' ¹⁶

IV

Not only the Nazi Third Reich, but also influential groups in Weimar Germany claimed that Germany was seriously overpopulated and on this alleged fact they based their claims for larger living space. The slogan, 'Volk ohne Raum' (a nation without living space), played a notable role in the German policy of expansion.¹⁷ German military victories, of course, largely satisfied these claims. The Reich incorporated 36,117 square miles of Polish land alone, and occupied immense areas in the Baltic and in the Ukraine. In October 1942, Goebbels frankly admitted: 'We have conquered a space, a living space as big as Germany, France, and England combined. . . Whereas once we were a people suffering from lack of space, today we no longer suffer.' ¹⁸ Actually, the original formula of *Volk ohne Raum* appears to have become more applicable in its inverted form, *Raum ohne Volk*. The most convincing proof of this was furnished by the five-year colonization experiment in the incorporated Polish provinces.

Even the most enthusiastic supporters of the mass repatriation of Germans from abroad never believed that millions of them would come back to 'fill out the empty Polish areas.' *Der Deutsche Volkswirt* of 27 September acknowledged frankly that 'the attempted change of structure of the Warthegau naturally cannot be achieved by settlement of the repatriates and by

¹⁶ Quoted in *Neues Bauerntum*, August 1940, p. 297.

¹⁷ See Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum*, for a popular emotionalized treatment of this theme.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, 19 October 1942.

transformation of the *Volksdeutsche* alone.' The German colonization plan therefore anticipated the settlement on Polish territory of hundreds of thousands of peasant families from Germany proper. Darré elaborated a plan whereby, during 1940, 400,000 families—at least 2 million people—were to be transferred from Baden, Württemberg, Westphalia, the Rhineland and Main districts.¹⁹ It was calculated at first that 40,000 farmers from Southwestern Germany could be placed on Wartheland farms after the Germans repatriated from Eastern Europe had been settled, while another 70,000 could be settled later in the frontier districts of Katowice and Ciechanów and in Pomorze. The announcement of these projects caused great uneasiness among the agricultural population in the Old Reich provinces. So strong was the resistance on the part of the peasants, who had no wish to be transplanted to new and strange lands, that all plans for organized mass transfers were soon abandoned.

National Socialist propagandists then launched a vigorous campaign for the voluntary migration of Reich Germans to the 'new German East,' making a special appeal to the younger generation. Directors of the German colonization program in the incorporated Polish provinces spared no effort to attract German settlers, but the task proved difficult. The Germans transferred from abroad had no choice and were obliged to settle there. But settlers from the Old Reich were under no such compulsion and showed very little disposition to heed the appeals of their government. *Das Reich*, in its issue of 9 March 1941, complained bitterly that Germans from the Old Reich 'were not at all interested in going to the East, and in various ways had to be lured there, if not actually forced to go.'

In order to 'lure' these reluctant Germans, the migration had to be rendered particularly attractive. *Der Deutsche Volkswirt* of 13 December 1940 stated frankly that 'if we are to succeed in

¹⁹ *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 10 January 1940.

transforming the eastern provinces into a prosperous German land, in accordance with the Führer's will, then the resettlement must be made attractive to the prospective resettlers; at least for the initial period, a better position should be secured for them.' The first step in this direction was the general exemption of the Germans in the incorporated Polish provinces from the war supplement to the income tax, a concession granted by decrees of 31 July and 6 September 1940.²⁰ A further decree of 9 December granted even greater tax relief to prospective settlers.²¹

The entire German press unanimously hailed these regulations as the beginning of a new era for German colonization in the eastern provinces. And, as a matter of fact, numerous Germans, attracted by the tax exemptions and other privileges, did transfer their residences to the Polish provinces. By the end of 1942, in Warthegau alone, more than 400,000 Germans of the Old Reich, largely officials, overseers, and merchants, 'were induced to settle down by the favorable opportunities offered them there.'²² They greatly outnumbered the resettlers transferred from abroad.

v

One of the bases of National Socialist ideology was the uncompromising rejection of the 'old policy of assimilation of racially foreign elements.' In *Mein Kampf* Hitler derided the old methods of Germanization through cultural denationalization of the dominated population:

Germanization can be applied only to the soil, never to people. What was generally understood by this word was a forced outward acceptance of the German language. But it is an almost inconceivable error to believe that, let us say, a Negro or a Chinese becomes a Teuton because he learns German and is willing to speak the German language in the future, and perhaps

²⁰ *Reichssteuerblatt*, 1940, pp. 689, 871.

²¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1940, I, p. 1565.

²² Transocean broadcast, 31 January 1943.

to give his vote to a German political party. . . The frequently demanded policy of Germanizing the Polish East unfortunately almost always rested on the same fallacy. Here, too, they believed the Polish element could be Germanized by a purely linguistic process of Teutonization. Here, too, the result would have been disastrous. . . Historically, the thing usefully Germanized has been the soil that our forefathers conquered with the sword and settled with German peasants.²³

National Socialism openly proclaimed that it did not believe in the superficial Germanization of the souls of the local population of alien blood. The only honest and effective way of Germanizing a country was through Germanization of the soil—the colonization of the country by racially pure Germans and the removal or enslavement of the local population. Assimilation of racially alien elements was considered inimical to the true interests of the German nation.

The incorporation of the western Polish provinces gave the Reich the long-coveted chance to put their theories into practice. In the preceding chapters, it has been stressed that the original aim of the German resettlement policy in this area was the ruthless supplanting of the local population by Germans transferred from abroad or from the Old Reich. No compromises were to be tolerated. Poles and Jews were to be removed and both the land and the towns were to be entirely Germanized.

After a year and a half of the most energetic implementation of these principles, the leaders of the Reich were forced to admit that the policy of Germanizing the soil without attempting to Germanize the local population of alien blood did not produce the desired result. The discrepancy between the number of deported Poles and Jews and the number of resettled Germans was too glaring. Depopulation of the territory had been carried out successfully, but repopulation through resettlement had failed. Many towns had lost from 50 to 80 per cent of their

²³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York, 1939), p. 378.

population.²⁴ To persist in pursuing this policy would turn this territory into an underpopulated second-class area.

This situation compelled the German government to abandon the principle of pure racial colonization, the Germanization of the soil, and to revert to the traditional policy of Germanization of souls with regard to the remaining Polish population. This new strategy took the form of a *Deutsche Volksliste* (German Folk Register), introduced by a decree of 4 March 1941²⁵ in a desperate attempt to discover in the Polish-speaking and Polish-feeling population some trace of Germandom that would justify retrieving these 'lost brethren' for Germanism. Gauleiter Forster of Danzig-West Prussia stated that the main purpose of the *Deutsche Volksliste* was to facilitate the return to Germanism of all those who 'had been overwhelmed and lost because of the Polish pressure in the course of the centuries. . . The real content and aim of the decree is to insure that not one drop of German blood is lost to the German nation.'²⁶

The criteria established by the German authorities in determining traces of Germandom were extremely liberal. 'Each family of whom it is known that it has had a German parent or grandparent, or has had German relations in the Old Reich, or any member of whom has been a member of the Evangelical Church at any time, or in regard to whom there is any other point of contact indicating German origin, must be strictly investigated,' stated Forster.²⁷ And the *Basler Nachrichten* of 14 April 1942, in a well-documented editorial on national mass conversion was certainly correct in stating that practically 'every Aryan, who is of German origin or who at least feels himself

²⁴ Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. pp. 157, 207.

²⁵ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1941, I, p. 118. A second decree concerning the *Deutsche Volksliste* was published on 31 January 1942. (*Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1942, I, pp. 51-2.)

²⁶ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 24 May 1941.

²⁷ Ibid. 24 May 1941.

to be German, is allowed to register with the *Deutsche Volksliste* even if he does not speak the German language now.'

The violation of this holiest of National Socialist principles was so flagrant that certain influential party leaders declared the strongest opposition to the policy of superficially Germanizing Polish elements and insistently warned of the dangers inherent in these attempts to make Germans out of Poles. *Das Schwarze Korps*, in its issue of 20 August 1942, protested: 'This would not be to the advantage of the German people, but would only satisfy those who think that Germanization is the cheapest and quickest way of getting a German majority in the ethnically mixed frontier areas.' In an apparent effort to counter this criticism within the ranks of his own organization, Himmler declared: 'We make no attempt to Germanize the population of the East by spreading the German language and introducing German laws. We want the East to be inhabited only by people of truly German blood.'²⁸

These proud declarations notwithstanding, the policy of Germanizing the local Polish population went forward with undiminished zeal.

²⁸ *Deutsche Arbeit*, August 1942.

XXIII

End of the Transfer Period

I

THE Reich intention of clearing the incorporated Polish territory of its prewar population and of repopulating it with Germans was stated and restated *ad nauseam*. Speaking in Bydgoszcz on 26 November 1939, Gauleiter Forster said that anyone who belonged to the Polish nation would have to leave the country.¹ Shortly before, at a National Socialist party demonstration at Torun (Thorn), he had declared: 'Your land is beautiful and fertile, but it lacks men. However, fellow countrymen of yours from every district of the Reich and the Germans from abroad will join you and together you will open up this fertile land. In a few years not a word of Polish will be spoken here in Thorn.'² In November 1940, President Dargel of the Ciechanów district of Gau East Prussia, estimated that of the 3,090,000 acres of land in this area, 1,854,000 would be assigned as farms to imported Germans, and 1,236,000 acres of poorer land would be forested, but that not one hectare was to be left for a Pole.³ No less definite on this point was Gauleiter Greiser who declared in a speech in Poznan in May 1941: 'In the future, no Pole will be allowed to have land or a home here.'⁴ In the light of these and other equally drastic pronouncements, it is important to tally the actual results of the German resettlement program.

¹ *Der Neue Tag*, 27 November 1939.

² *Ulmer Tageblatt*, 21 October 1939.

³ Evans, *The Nazi New Order in Poland*, p. 70.

⁴ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 13 May 1941.

At the end of 1941 there were in the Warthegau 221,000 resettlers.⁵ By the following spring Gauleiter Greiser reported that the number had risen to 300,000.⁶ In the fall of 1943 the number was still put at 300,000 including 60,500 families of which 33,000 were peasant families.⁷ (Settlers from the Old Reich were not included in this figure.) Data published in the spring of 1944 adhered to this same figure.⁸ In July 1944, the number of peasant resettler families was estimated at 35,000. They had received twice as much land as they had possessed in their former homelands and were cultivating 1,976,800 acres or a quarter of the total amount of agricultural land in this province.⁹

It appears then that after the spring of 1942 the number of resettlers in the Warthegau remained stationary. On 31 January 1943, it is true, Transocean reported that 'since Germany regained the Warthegau province three years ago, more than 700,000 Germans have flowed into this province,' but, quoting Gauleiter Greiser himself, admitted that of this number 400,000 had come from the Old Reich.

On 2 July 1942, the *Danziger Vorposten* announced that 148,039 Germans transferred from the eastern regions had been resettled in Danzig-West Prussia. Since then no figures have been published that would indicate any considerable increase in the total number of resettlers in this province. The *Danziger Vorposten* of 16 October 1943 reported that there were 9,960 peasant families among the resettlers, including 8,642 families from Bessarabia, 527 from Wolhynia, 341 from the regions of Chelm and Lublin, and 45 from the Baltic. They had received 543,600 acres of former Polish property.

In Gau Upper Silesia, 2,407 peasant families consisting of

⁵ *Archiv für Wanderungswesen und Auslandskunde*, Heft 1-2, 1942.

⁶ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 15 May 1942.

⁷ *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 7 October 1943.

⁸ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 17 March 1944.

⁹ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 July 1944.

9,096 persons and 562 peasant craftsmen families numbering 2,226 persons—a total of 2,969 families and 11,322 persons—had been settled by November 1941. A study of the settlement and agriculture in this province, published in August 1942, stated that the area could not absorb more than 3,000 new peasant families.¹⁰ There are no figures available that would indicate any considerable influx of German resettlers into the towns of Upper Silesia.

The Regierungsbezirk Zischenau (Ciechanów) had been destined for the resettlement of the 50,000 transferred Lithuanian Germans. As stated in an earlier chapter, only 3,600 were actually colonized there, the rest having been sent back to Lithuania in 1942.

Thus a total of some 463,000 transferred Germans, exclusive of those from the Old Reich, can be accounted for as resettled in the incorporated Polish provinces. Allowing for possible omissions, their number may be estimated roughly at some 500,000.

II

Further transfers of German minorities from abroad to the incorporated Polish provinces were halted after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, and in December 1942 Gauleiter Greiser announced in a speech at Lodz that the first stage of the colonization of these provinces through the resettlement of Germans from Eastern Europe was finished, and that henceforth only German colonists from the Reich and from overseas would be settled there.¹¹ Early in 1943, however, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reported an interview with Greiser, who explained that owing to the military situation, the Germanization of Western Poland would have to be temporarily stabilized on the basis of

¹⁰ See 'Oberschlesien ruft 3000 Bauern,' in *Krakauer Zeitung*, 28 August 1942.

¹¹ Quoted from *Bulletin Polski*, 30 December 1942.

its present population, and that the process of colonization in this region would have to be interrupted until the end of the war because the Reich could not spare any more colonists.¹²

In suspending transfer operations, the Reich virtually acknowledged that the current ethnic structure of the 'new German East' would have to be considered fixed for the time being, if not permanently. At a National Socialist party meeting in Poznan on 30 January 1942, the situation was neatly summarized: 'Today the Wartheland has again acquired a German aspect. The Poles who constitute our sole labor power can now be at rest here, although certain of the German regulations are irksome to them. The German law of life is the highest law. Those who were not tractable have been eliminated from the country. Now that the transfer of population has been carried through, the Poles who want to work have an assured future as wards of the Reich.'¹³

Other German pronouncements followed the same line. A few weeks later, at a congress of German peasants in the Warthegau, Gauleiter Greiser, addressing the German colonists from the Baltic and elsewhere, declared that 'the increasing agricultural production is an indispensable factor of victory. . . To achieve this end, Polish labor must be exploited to the utmost. . . Now the Polish agricultural workers have a chance to show whether they seriously want to be loyal workers of the Reich. Those who do, and whose work is particularly valuable, will be allowed to remain in the area.'¹⁴

Himmler, it is true, announced in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* of 16 August 1942 that in the approaching fall another half million Poles would be deported to the East from Danzig-West Prussia alone—300,000 who had settled there in and after 1919, and 200,000 who were considered incapable of Germanization.

¹² Quoted from *Poland Fights*, 1 February 1942.

¹³ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 1 February 1942.

¹⁴ Ibid. 15 February 1942.

But this threat was never realized. Ulrich Greifelt also forecast the imminent deportation of additional millions of Poles in comparison with which previous deportations would look like mere child's play. This threat, too, remained only that.

When asked why the Germans left so many Poles in the incorporated provinces, Stanislaw Stronsky, Minister of Information in the Polish government in exile, gave the obvious answer: 'Simply because they have no one else to settle in Western Poland, and if they were further to deport the Polish population, they would bring all agricultural and industrial work to a standstill.'¹⁵ But the situation was somewhat more complex than that and demands further clarification.

The complete cessation of German transfer and resettlement activities is generally attributed to the outbreak of the German-Soviet war on 22 June 1941. These two events did actually coincide, and there is undoubtedly a certain causal interdependence between them. The whole machinery of transport, as well as all the energies of the German administration and of the SS units engaged in the transfer and colonization work, became almost entirely absorbed by the war with the Soviet Union. It would, however, be superficial and erroneous to take into account only the purely technical aspects of the problem. There were other and less obvious considerations.

As stated earlier in this study, Hitler's scheme for evacuating German minorities was not conceived as a unique, uniformly applicable, and perfect solution for the problem of German minorities all over the world, or even for the two million or so Germans in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Nor did it spring from a radical change in National Socialist ideology with regard to German minorities in foreign countries. It was, rather, an emergency answer to a temporary situation created by the Reich's old alliance with Italy and by the new pact with the

¹⁵ Radio speech of 11 February 1942; see supplement to *Polish News Bulletin*, no. 118, 13 February 1942.

Soviet Union. German minority groups living in areas that fell within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence constituted a potential threat to the Reich's relations with its Soviet partner. It was in an effort to eliminate this threat that the Reich inaugurated its program of transfers. The plan remained in effect just as long as it was necessary to insure Soviet friendship; it stopped abruptly as soon as the necessity vanished.¹⁶

If the Reich so desperately needed more colonists for the incorporated areas, one may ask why it did not draw on the German minorities still living in countries that had not come within the Soviet sphere of influence. There were the 15,800 Germans who were transferred to the Reich in the winter of 1941-2, and the 20,000 Bosnian Germans removed from Croatia in the winter of 1942. In addition, there were still 865,000 Germans in Hungary (1.4 million, according to German sources), 128,000 in Slovakia (160,000, according to German sources), 546,000 in rump Romania, 197,000 in Croatia, and 200,000 in German-occupied Serbia, including the Banat. The Reich had never contemplated the evacuation of the German minorities from the latter countries, where it had secured a privileged status for these 'Trojan horses.' Leaders of National Socialist policy apparently considered the strengthening of such outposts of Germanism of far greater importance than the complete Germanization of the incorporated areas of Poland. These 'splinters of the German nationality' were destined to remain at their posts as servants in the cause of German imperialism.

III

Contrary to all expectations on the part of the Reich, resettlement in the incorporated Polish province was suddenly re-

¹⁶ With regard to Italy, the necessity still existed, though not so urgently, and as late as the winter of 1941-2, 15,800 Germans from the Italian-annexed province of Ljubljana were transferred to the Reich.

newed in the spring of 1944, with the arrival of the first 80,000 Germans evacuated from the Black Sea area and the Zhitomir region, as a result of the general German retreat from the Soviet Ukraine.¹⁷ Of approximately 350,000 Germans who were ordered by the German military authorities to leave their homes for safer areas, some 285,000 were directed to the Warthegau.¹⁸

Referring to the installation of this new wave of resettlers, the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* of 8 February 1944 stated that it was impossible at the time to procure independent farms for them, so that for the most part they would have to be temporarily employed as agricultural and armament workers. A certain number of Black Sea resettlers were allotted independent households: 100 resettlers were given new farms in the district of Wolszlyn;¹⁹ 250 were installed in the neighborhood of Bolchatow;²⁰ and a training establishment for a group of Black Sea refugees was opened at Lubraniec in the district of Wloclawek.²¹ In March 1944, announcing the arrival of the millionth German in the Warthegau, Gauleiter Greiser included in this figure the first 80,000 Black Sea Germans who had already reached his Gau, and predicted that the number of Germans in the Wartheland would reach 1.1 million when the immigration of the Black Sea Germans had been completed.²² He reported in November 1944 that the Wartheland German population totaled 1.25 million, including the Black Sea settlers.²³ More than half of this total, however, was made up of Germans from the Old Reich, and of local *Volksdeutsche*.

¹⁷ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 15 March 1944.

¹⁸ DNB dispatch, 5 November 1944.

¹⁹ *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 15 February 1944.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 3 March 1944.

²¹ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 29 March 1944.

²² *Ibid.* 15 March 1944; *Völkischer Beobachter*, 17 March 1944.

²³ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 16 November 1944.

XXIV

Resistance of the Polish Population

I

ALTHOUGH the dispossessed Polish and Jewish population was naturally enraged by the ruthless German confiscation and deportation methods, open and organized resistance to the hated conqueror was practically impossible. The Jews, of course, were rendered completely helpless by their specific position. The Poles, too, in the dreadful early months of German rule, were incapable of effective action because of the mass deportations. Yet, it was not long before various forms of individual resistance began to be manifest, and the sum of these single protests eventually added up to an impressive total.

Curt Riess, whose book, *Underground Europe*, is based on information received from the various exiled governments, reports that the first incident of this kind occurred as early as November 1939 in Kosciatowice, a community of some 750 to 900 inhabitants in Maty Ostrowice. German police arrived and announced that all inhabitants were to evacuate the settlement within twenty hours. The Poles listened, nodded, and left their homes, withdrawing to the surrounding mountains. On the following day, the Germans arrived. They began to take over the farms and to till the fields, but from then on they had no peace. The former villagers returned again and again, shot down the usurpers, and disappeared into the mountains where German military expeditions could not find them. After five months of such insecurity, the Germans sent 300 soldiers into the settlement, and for half a year the colonists worked under military protection. The soldiers had scarcely left, however, when the

natives were back from the mountains, and the guerrilla war was on again.¹

Similar instances of active resistance are mentioned in *The German New Order in Poland*: 'Here and there the Polish peasants, being brought to utter despair, actively opposed the agents of the Gestapo and the SS (as, for example, in the county of Kepno in Posnania), and then Polish blood flowed freely; in other places again the Polish peasants themselves set fire to their houses and killed their horses and cattle, so as not to give them into the hands of the Germans.' A substantial report on the tragedy of the peasants in the Żywiec country relates that the peasants threatened by deportation in the autumn of 1940

began to destroy their farm buildings and stock, so as to leave as little as possible for the Germans. They cut the throats of their fowl, sheep, goats and cattle. They scattered their feather quilts and pillows, throwing the feathers down the walls, they broke the windows, destroyed the tiled stoves, and chopped up the floor boards and doors. Every night chickens and geese were hung on the door of the police station, with the inscription: 'They would rather be hanged than be eaten by Germans.'²

Even the German press from time to time recorded stories of such sabotage. The *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* of 6 September 1942 reported that in Wielun 'unknown persons' broke into the house of the chief of the local German colonization organization, wounded him seriously, killed his wife, and fled without touching considerable amounts of money kept on the premises. The same newspaper related in its issue of 20 May 1942 that a special court in Poznan had sentenced to death a Polish agricultural worker accused of sabotaging his work, of deliberately damaging agricultural machines, and of spreading hate propaganda against the Germans among his comrades. The 18 Sep-

¹ Riess, *Underground Europe*, p. 216.

² Polish Ministry of Information, *The German New Order in Poland*, pp. 258, 197.

tember 1942 issue reported that a special German court in Wloclawek sentenced to death two Polish agricultural workers for sabotage and destruction of a tractor on a large estate administered by a German. A Polish agricultural worker of Birken-dorf in Koscian county was sentenced to death by the special court at Poznan for having removed parts of a potato-digging machine.³ The same court sentenced 32 more Poles for economic sabotage; one was sentenced to death, and others were given seven years of hard labor in a penal camp.⁴ A special court at Danzig sentenced a Polish farm laborer to two years' imprisonment for 'deliberately damaging a machine belonging to his German employer.'⁵

There were also numerous cases of destruction by the Poles of property marked for confiscation by the Germans. On 28 January 1941, the Polish Information Center stated that, according to reports reaching London from occupied Poland, houses being taken over by Germans had been set on fire and grain stores destroyed.⁶ The German-controlled *Kurier Czeslchowski* of 5 October 1941 reported that peasant sabotage in Poland had increased in the autumn after all the harvests were in: seventeen barns full of crops and nine farms with a large number of cattle had been destroyed. In January 1943, many barns and stables with livestock belonging to German colonists near Slupca were reported to have been burned down.⁷ It was also reported early that year that fourteen villages from which Poles had been evicted and which were destined for German settlers had been burned down by Polish peasants; a railway bridge was blown up on the night of 1 January and among the trains derailed was one carrying German settlers; in many places near the villages

³ *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, 21 January 1942.

⁴ *Polish Feature and News Service*, no. 52, 1942.

⁵ *Danziger Vorposten*, 26 April 1941.

⁶ *News Bulletin on Eastern European Affairs*, no. 56, 29 January 1941.

⁷ *Polish Review*, 25 January 1943.

occupied by Germans the railway lines, stations, telegraph and telephone lines were damaged.⁸

In every case of fires on Polish farms handed over to German settlers, the German authorities took it for granted that the fires had been set by Poles. The first of a series of reports issued by the Inter-Allied Information Committee in London on conditions in occupied territories tells a characteristically tragic story of this kind. On 5 August 1941, in a village near Sroda in Posen province, fire destroyed a farm from which the Polish owner had been expelled, and which had been handed over to a German settler from the Baltic. Poles of the same village were suspected by the Germans of having deliberately set fire to the farm. All sixty Polish men of the village were arrested and notified that if in three days those guilty of the suspected arson had not given themselves up, twenty-five of the hostages would be shot. After three days, these twenty-five hostages were brought to the gutted remains of the farm, and there the execution began in the presence of the Baltic tenant. After the tenth of the hostages had been killed, the German settler broke down and confessed that he himself had committed the arson with the object of obtaining the insurance. Despite this confession, the intoxicated members of the SS squad did not cease firing until the twenty-fifth Pole was dead.⁹

The situation was little better in the towns. The *Breslauer Neueste Nachrichten* of 18 September 1942 revealed that a German court in Wloclawek had sentenced to death a resident of Gorlice for setting fire to a factory. Every fourth one of the Poles arrested on suspicion of having set fire on 17 October 1941 to a large petrol refinery in Strobe in Southern Poland was shot by the Gestapo. Polish house and apartment owners who had German tenants forcibly billeted with them did not always con-

⁸ *Dagens Nyeter*, 16 January 1943.

⁹ Inter-Allied Information Committee, *The Axis System of Hostages*, p. 13.

ceal their bitterness. One, in whose flat a German woman had been installed, flatly announced that 'he would rather have 20 Jews in his flat than one German woman'; for this crime, he was sentenced to three years in a penal camp.¹⁰

Reporting on the active opposition of the Polish population to the German resettlement program, the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* complained that the Polish guerrilla detachments did not spare 'even the peaceful German settlers.' According to the Polish Minister of Information in the exiled government, Professor Stanislaw Kot, Polish guerrilla and sabotage activities were especially intensive in Eastern Poland, mainly on roads and railways leading to the Soviet Union. The incorporated western provinces, where the German administration was much more stable, were relatively calm. Nevertheless, Kot reported, 'as reprisals against the destruction of Polish villages, several villages of German settlers have been burned. Armed Poles attack German settlers who occupy the homes of expelled Poles. Many newly arrived Germans were killed.'¹¹

II

It is true that German colonization in the incorporated provinces was too well organized and too vigorously imposed to be seriously affected or endangered by sabotage on the part of the Poles. The chances for a successful uprising by the native population were pitifully small. Nevertheless, the psychological effect of even sporadic Polish resistance should not be underestimated.

In an underground report on the situation in the Polish villages, published by *Free World* in May 1943, there is a revealing description of the temper prevailing among the Polish peasants. 'The farm population harbors a terrible, silent, grim, truly peasant hatred. People in Poland today do not expend themselves in

¹⁰ *Danziger Vorposten*, 20 November 1942.

¹¹ *New York Times*, 3 May 1943.

speeches. There is no talk of revenge nor of the mass executions and massacres. The peasant merely says, "The day will come. . ."

The German colonists felt oppressed by the atmosphere of concentrated hate and the ever-present threat of revenge. On 2 October 1942, the *Deutsche Rundschau* reported that a special conference of German peasants had been called in Bydgoszcz in order to discuss means of combating the *Landflucht* of the German colonists, who were fleeing to urban centers of the Reich or even to Polish cities, where they felt safer than on the farms in the midst of alien and hostile peasants. The *Deutsche Rundschau* asked angrily: 'What is the name for a man who flees from the army? A deserter. What is the name of a man who, in a moment of great need, flees the post assigned to him by Hitler?' The conference severely criticized the land deserters and passed the following resolution: ' . . . the flight of the German rural population to the cities is inexcusable; the authorities must, therefore, employ all available means to put an end to this situation.'

A voluntary *Selbstschutz* (self-defense) group was organized by the Germans as early as 1940. In May 1942, a special decree ordered the immediate and compulsory arming of all German civilians between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five. The *Krakauer Zeitung* of 8 May 1942 explained that the decree was made necessary because of 'special political circumstances requiring constant armed watchfulness by all Germans living in foreign surroundings.'

Many of the German resettlers living in this atmosphere so heavily charged with hate and fear began to suspect what kind of future awaited them in the event of the military defeat of the Reich. According to a report from one of the expropriated Poles, a German baron from Latvia, settled on the estate of a Polish landowner, remarked to him: 'You should realize how much better your lot is than mine. Sooner or later you will

return to your property, and I shall have to leave this place without any hope of returning to my estate in Latvia.' In quoting this report, *The German New Order in Poland* stressed that it was by no means an isolated case.¹²

During the German occupation, Polish circles made no effort to conceal their conviction that all the Germans living in the incorporated and occupied Polish areas must eventually be removed without exception.¹³ In the 'Program for People's Poland,' drawn up by various Polish underground groups after much deliberation and discussion, a special paragraph deals with the problem of the colonized Germans and the *Volksdeutsche* in the future liberated Polish republic: 'The German population, which settled on Polish soil in order to promote the Germanization of Poland, will be returned to Germany. The same is to apply to all who registered as '*Volksdeutsche*.' Permission to remain in Poland should be granted only to those citizens of German origin who have given active proof of their devotion to the Polish State, particularly during the present war and the Nazi occupation.'¹⁴ No less specific on this point was the stand taken by the Soviet-sponsored Polish Committee for National Liberation, in a Lublin radio broadcast on 28 September 1944.

In full accord with this dominant trend of Polish political thought, Edward Taborsky advocated 'an integral transfer of all the German minorities in Poland and Czechoslovakia after the war' as the best possible solution to this difficult problem.¹⁵ It remained doubtful, however, whether this organized and constructive solution, which presupposed relatively peaceful conditions and a certain amount of mutual good will, would be

¹² Polish Ministry of Information, op. cit. p. 206.

¹³ 'Whatsoever a Man Soweth, That Shall He Also Reap,' in *Polish Review*, no. 4, 16 November 1942; 'There Will Be No Place For Such Germans in Poland,' in *Polish Review*, no. 28, 27 July 1942.

¹⁴ Polish Labor Group, *Underground Poland Speaks*, p. 19.

¹⁵ Edward Taborsky, 'The Minority Problem in Central Europe,' in *National Review*, September 1942.

feasible in the immediate postwar period. It seemed more probable that the sorely tried local population, intent on avenging the cruel harm done to it by the German masters, would anticipate such transfer plans. Furthermore, as the *Polish News Bulletin* significantly noted, most of the German settlers would not wait to welcome the old Polish owners back.¹⁶

III

In January 1945, Soviet troops advanced into the German-incorporated Polish provinces. As early as the preceding October, Gauleiter Greiser, although maintaining that 'it is not likely that the Russians will ever break through the Vistula bend,' had announced that German authorities had made all preparations to meet even that contingency and to secure the 'evacuation to safer districts in orderly columns.'¹⁷ Such preparations, however, were completely upset by the Russian blitz advance. German plans were geared to the evacuation of some 1.5 million persons, but the territory overrun by the Soviet armies proved to be so much larger than anticipated that the evacuation machinery was suddenly called upon to handle 3 million refugees instead.¹⁸ The whole evacuation scheme simply collapsed. Herbert Hahn, writing in *Das Reich*, frankly admitted that 'the figure of those who had to be evacuated doubled almost overnight. Systematic evacuation turned into an improvised stream of refugees flooding back in batches. Timetables, itineraries, special trains, and luggage transports, food and supply centers, the well-rehearsed welfare arrangements had to go by the board.'¹⁹

Official German sources openly acknowledged that the bulk

¹⁶ *Polish News Bulletin*, 5 December 1941.

¹⁷ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 22 October 1944.

¹⁸ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11 February 1945.

¹⁹ Quoted in *Der Bund*, 5 February 1945.

of the German population in 'eastern German provinces' did not manage to leave. 'In Torun, in Grudziadz, in Lodz and in the Upper Silesian industrial area millions of Germans are now in Russian hands,' Nachrichten- und Pressedienst reported on 7 February. Four days earlier the Berlin correspondent of the Swedish *Morgontidningen* had stated that 'the majority of eastern Germans remained in their homes . . . because . . . large columns of refugees were unable to escape the Russians in time.' There are no precise data on the number of German resettlers from abroad among the Germans caught in the Polish areas by the Soviet advance. The *Stockholms-Tidningen* of 11 February 1945 reported that not all the Baltic transferees succeeded in escaping, and that some 30,000 of them remained in Poznan and 10,000 in Lodz. There is no reason to suppose that their fate differed greatly from that of other German resettler groups.

But contrary to all predictions, there was apparently no upsurge of the local Polish population against the remaining Germans; no bloody revenge was taken for the years of oppression and pillage. The German press has voiced no complaints in regard to the fate of the German population in the evacuated Polish provinces, and no reports of 'atrocities' committed against the Germans by the Soviet and Polish authorities have been published. The Polish provisional government, however, has manifested a firm resolve to eliminate, once and for all, the German menace from the Polish territory. On 5 February, the Lublin radio broadcast the following warning: 'What will be the attitude of the Poles toward the Germans who have settled in the western territories? Through their bestiality and the enormity of their crimes, the Germans have created between themselves and the Poles an abyss which cannot be bridged. . . It is our wish that there should not be any German minority in Poland.' A mass demonstration in Katowice demanded the immediate removal of the Germans from Silesia and from the Dabrowa mining district. 'The Polish people cannot allow the

Germans, who have harmed Poland for centuries, to remain on Polish territory. . . The Poles should treat the Germans in the same way as the German invaders have treated the Poles.' ²⁰ In Lodz, the Polish Citizens' Militia started to round up Germans as soon as the city was free. First they put them to work clearing snow; subsequently, all males over 17 years of age were made to repair ruined buildings.²¹ In Kalisz, a number of remaining Germans were immediately imprisoned and others were asked to leave town.²²

The ultimate fate of the German resettlers in Poland has as yet not been officially decided. There is every reason to believe that they will be placed in forced labor camps and their property confiscated, quite apart from the fact that many of them will have to answer individually before special penal courts for crimes committed against the Polish nation.

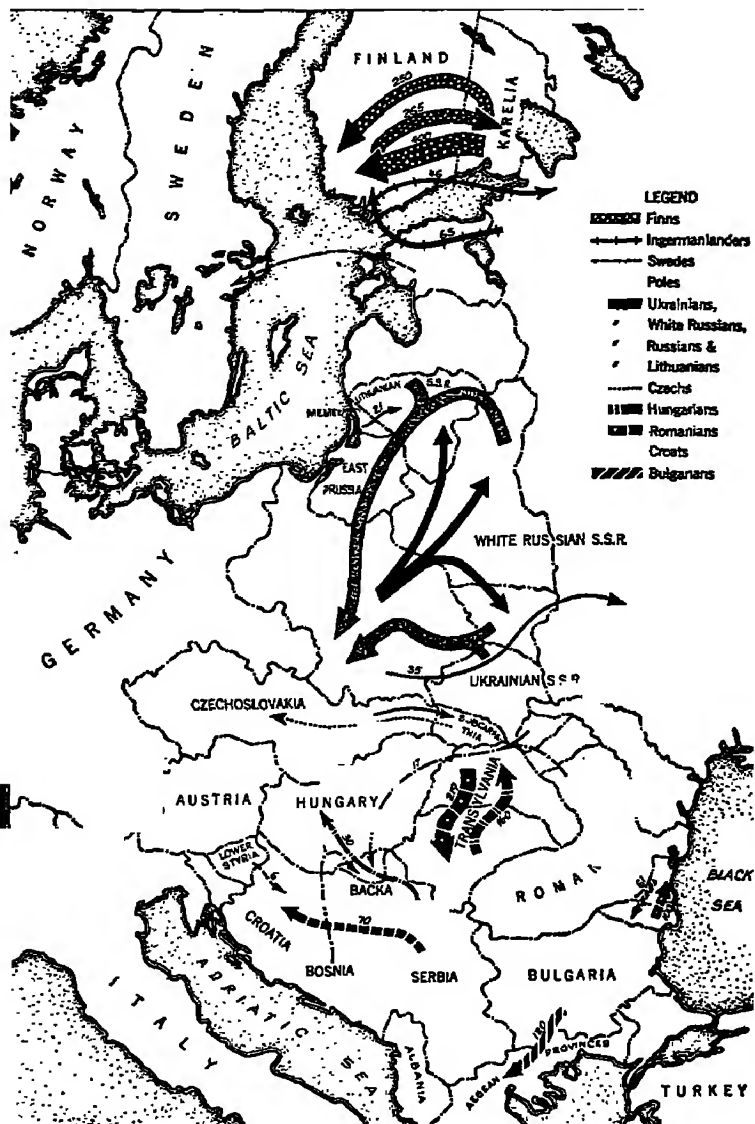
²⁰ Broadcast by the Moscow embassy of the Polish provisional government, 12 March 1945.

²¹ *Radio Polskie* (Lublin), 28 January, 4 February, and 22 February 1945.

²² Federal Communications Commission Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service report, 21 February 1945.

PART IV

TRANSFER OF NON-GERMAN MINORITIES



TRANSFER OF NON-GERMAN MINORITIES, 1939-45
 (Figures given in thousands)

XXV

Transfer Policy of the Soviet Union

I

IN earlier chapters of this study, the three Soviet-German transfer agreements have been discussed in some detail, with special emphasis on the German operations. The treaty of 5 September 1940 dealt exclusively with the transfer of *Volksdeutsche* from Soviet-incorporated Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and so did not involve any Soviet transfers. But the other two treaties of 3 November 1939 and 10 January 1941 were typical treaties for the exchange of populations and provided for the optional repatriation to the Soviet Union of Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, and Lithuanians from the German-incorporated or German-occupied Polish and Lithuanian territories.

Under the terms of the 3 November treaty, persons of German ethnic nationality living in the Soviet-incorporated Polish territories of Wolhynia, eastern Galicia, and the Narew area were granted the right to opt in favor of the Reich and to migrate there, while persons of Ukrainian, White Russian (Byelorussian), and Russian ethnic nationality living in German-dominated Polish territories were given a similar right with regard to the Soviet Union.¹ Based on reciprocity, this treaty practically applied the German conception of *Schutzrecht* to those Ukrainians and White Russians who resided in the former Polish territories annexed or occupied by the Reich. Soviet intervention in Poland was admittedly motivated by this 'protective

¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

right.' In a radio address on 17 September 1939, Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotoff emphatically declared that 'it is impossible to expect from the Soviet government a disinterestedness in the fate of consanguineous Ukrainians and White Russians.'²

The Soviet press, however, was significantly silent with regard to this particular aspect of the November agreement. While the Germans issued a spate of reports on the transfer of the *Volksdeutsche* from the Soviet areas, one may search the Soviet newspapers in vain for data on the repatriation of Ukrainians, Russians, and Byelorussians. In apparent agreement with Soviet policy, German publications also abstained from any comment on the scope and character of such an evacuation. Therefore we lack precise and authoritative information on this topic and are obliged to reconstruct events on the basis of the scattered and contradictory reports casually issued by the German and neutral press.

It is clear that the authors of the agreement expected that the number of persons eligible for evacuation to the Soviet Union would greatly exceed the number of Germans to be evacuated, since two Soviet chief plenipotentiaries with residence in Chelm and Jaroslaw were appointed to handle the transfer details, while only one German chief plenipotentiary was designated.³ According to the Moscow correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Moscow German circles estimated that the agreement would affect 150,000 Germans and about one million Russians.⁴

This estimate was in sharp contrast to actual results. In both the German-incorporated Polish provinces and the German-held Government General, the number of Russians in 1939 did not exceed 21,000 persons, 11,000 in the former area and 10,000 in the latter. There were 2,000 White Russians in the Govern-

² *Pravda*, 30 September 1939.

³ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

⁴ *Ibid.* 18 November 1939.

ment General and 1,000 in the incorporated provinces. The number of Ukrainians, it is true, reached 357,000 in the Government General and 4,000 in the incorporated provinces,⁵ but the Ukrainian population in Poland was greatly under the influence of extremely nationalistic anti-Soviet Ukrainian parties and could hardly be expected to choose Soviet citizenship.

The transfer of Germans appears to have been carried out first. It began on 20 November 1939 and was completed on 9 February 1940.⁶ During this period, there was no word of the evacuation of Russians. But on 18 February, a telegram from the Radio news agency in Zurich reported that 'yesterday [17 February], in accordance with the German-Soviet agreement, marked the beginning of the resettlement of Ukrainians and Byelorussians living west of the new German-Russian frontier and having opted in favor of the USSR.'⁷ There was no information whatever with regard to the option procedure or the number of those who availed themselves of the option right. A report dated 20 February 1940 in the *Bulletin of International News* said that 'the last batch of 35,000 Russians who were being transferred from the "German Government General" in Poland arrived in Russia; the rest numbering over 450,000 has refused to leave.' Actually, there never were 450,000 'Russians' in the Government General, even including Ukrainians and White Russians. It may be assumed that the total number of persons who opted for the Soviet Union and were transferred to Soviet territory was not much in excess of the number of those transported with the 'last batch of 35,000.' In the course of the three-day period between 17 and 20 February no great number of persons with their possessions could have been transported.

The Soviet-German treaty of 10 January 1941 provided for

⁵ *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland, September 1939-June 1941*, p. 9. (No Russian statistics are available.)

⁶ Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*, pp. 25, 27.

⁷ *Posledniya Novosti*, 18 February 1940.

the optional transfer to the Reich of German folk groups in the three Baltic states recently incorporated into the Soviet Union.⁸ With regard to Estonia and Latvia, only the remnants of German minorities in these countries were involved. But in the case of Lithuania, the contracting parties agreed, as a counterpart to the transfer of persons of German ethnic nationality to the Reich, to the transfer to the Soviet Union of 'Lithuanian citizens and persons of Lithuanian, Russian and White Russian [ethnic] nationality,' living in the former Lithuanian Memel region and the once-Polish district of Suwalki. The Memel region had been annexed by the Reich on 23 March 1939, and the Suwalki district had been occupied by Soviet troops on 25 September of that year, but had been ceded to the Reich in November.⁹ All Lithuanians, Russians, and White Russians who wished to settle in the Soviet Union were to register before 25 March 1941 at which time the transfer was to be completed.

Under the terms of the 10 January treaty, 21,343 persons opted in favor of Soviet citizenship and were transferred to the Soviet Union. Of this number, 11,995 were Lithuanians and 9,228 were Russians and White Russians.¹⁰ It may be assumed that the Lithuanians settled in Lithuania proper. There is no data on the final destination of the Russians and White Russians.

II

Under the terms of the Soviet-German agreement of 28 September 1939, the Soviet Union gained the eastern part of the dismembered Polish territory, an area of 77,606 square miles with a population of some 13 million. As early as 10 October, the Soviet Union ceded 2,750 square miles with 457,500 inhabitants to Lithuania and at once engaged in the incorporation of

⁸ *Mirovoye Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, 1941, p. 128.

⁹ *Pravda*, 26 September 1939; Tolischus, *They Wanted War*, p. 310.

¹⁰ *Pravda*, 26 March 1941.

the remaining territories. Assemblies were elected on 23 October in western Ukraine (41,650 square miles with 8 million inhabitants) and in western White Russia (34,000 square miles and 4.8 million inhabitants). About 90 per cent of the votes were cast for the only list of candidates, which was the one approved by the Soviet authorities. The National Assemblies so elected met in Lwów and Białystok respectively and petitioned the Supreme Soviet in Moscow for admission into the Soviet Union as parts of the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet Socialist Republics. The petitions were granted on 1 and 2 November respectively, and formal incorporation of these territories followed on 3 November.¹¹

The Polish government-in-exile and the governments of the other Allied powers have never accorded official recognition to the change in the political status of these territories. Following the German attack on the Soviet Union, the latter signed a treaty with Poland on 30 July 1941 in which the Soviet-German treaty of 1939 on the partition of Poland was declared to have lost its validity. The question of future Polish-Soviet boundaries was left unsettled. The Poles in London interpreted the treaty as a restoration of the 1939 borders, but the Soviet Union took a different view, making plain its intention to retain the parts of Poland incorporated into the Soviet republics by treating persons from those territories as nationals of the Soviet Union. The conflict grew steadily more bitter and less susceptible to compromise. The main stumbling block was the question of the ethnic structure of the contested regions, the Soviet Union contending that Ukrainians and White Russians comprised the overwhelming majority, while the Poles insisted that nearly 40 per cent of the population and the largest single national group was composed of Poles. Faced with this impasse, the Soviet Union took steps to support a pro-Soviet Union of Polish Patriots

¹¹ Ibid. 28 and 29 October, 4 November 1939.

in Moscow as a rival to the London Polish government. After the entry of Soviet forces into German-occupied territory in January 1944, a Polish Committee of National Liberation (PCNL) was set up with headquarters at Lublin, and was granted recognition by the Soviet Union. In January 1945, the PCNL proclaimed itself the Polish provisional government.

In a bold attempt to solve the border problem definitely and forever, the Soviet government concluded with the Lublin committee a series of agreements providing for the exchange, on a voluntary basis, of Poles living in the disputed areas and of Ukrainians and White Russians living in Poland proper. In accordance with the constitutional amendment of February 1944 granting the constituent Soviet republics the power to establish their own foreign commissariats, these agreements were concluded by the Lublin committee with the governments of the Ukrainian, White Russian, and Lithuanian republics separately. Complete texts have never been made public, but there have been detailed communiques reproducing the main provisions.¹² Apparently all three agreements were similar in content.

Under the terms of the agreements, all persons of Polish ethnic nationality who were Polish citizens before 17 September 1939 and resided within the territory of the Ukrainian, White Russian, and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics were allowed to opt for Polish citizenship and to be evacuated to Poland. Correspondingly, persons of Ukrainian, White Russian, and Lithuanian ethnic nationality residing within the territory of the Polish state were granted the right to choose Soviet citizenship and to move to Soviet territory. The transfer was to be carried out on the basis of the complete free will of the persons involved. The fact that no compulsion, either direct or indirect, was to be permitted, was emphatically stressed by the Polish

¹² *New York Times*, 15 September 1944; *Washington Post*, 15 September 1944; *Radio Polskie* (Lublin), 23 September 1944; *Pravda*, 25 September 1944; Polish provisional government broadcasts (Moscow), 8 April 1945.

provisional government broadcast on 8 April 1945. Declaration by the person desiring to be transferred could be either written or oral. Persons of either country who wanted to resettle were asked to register between 15 October and 1 December 1944; the actual transfer was to be carried out between the latter date and April 1945.

Other important data on the Polish-Lithuanian transfer agreement are contained in an article by Theodore Bayer.¹⁸ According to this obviously well-informed author, the Polish-Lithuanian transfer agreement applied not only to all persons of Polish or Lithuanian ethnic origin, but also to Jews who formerly resided in Lithuania and who, for personal reasons, preferred to live in Poland; they were to be granted Polish citizenship. Similarly, Jews residing on Polish territory who wished to live in Lithuania were to be permitted to do so and to become citizens of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. Bayer also made the revealing statement that the Polish-Lithuanian agreement included the right of a Pole who formerly resided in Poland and who, again for personal reasons, preferred to live in the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic to resettle in Lithuania and become a citizen. The same right of choosing citizenship also applied to a Lithuanian who preferred to settle in Poland.

We have no reason to believe that these provisions were a peculiar feature of the Polish-Lithuanian agreement. Since all three transfer agreements were similar in content, it may be assumed that parallel clauses were included in the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-White Russian agreements. If so, the sorting out of transferees between Poland and the three Soviet republics was to be carried out in accordance not only with the ethnic origin of the prospective resettlers, but also with their

¹⁸ Bayer, 'Voluntary Population Transfer,' in *Soviet Russia Today*, December 1944.

political and social sympathies. The agreements made possible not only the resettlement of Poles in Poland and of Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and White Russians in the respective Soviet republics, but left room for an eventual population movement in the opposite direction: persons of Polish ethnic origin could, under the agreement, opt for transfer to one of the Soviet republics, where their presence would increase the existing Polish minority, and similarly, Ukrainians or Lithuanians could reinforce the existing minority groups on Polish territory. Such transfers, which would be in contradiction with the intention of the agreement to eliminate ethnic minorities, would be motivated by the preference of the persons involved for life under a Soviet or non-Soviet regime. In other words, the treaty provided for the elimination not only of ethnic but also of political minorities.

An interesting feature of the Polish-Lithuanian transfer agreement was the fact that owing to the fifteen-year lapse in diplomatic and trade relations between Lithuania and Poland, there were no adequate railroad facilities between the two countries. Both contracting parties therefore asked the neighboring White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic to extend her facilities for the use of the prospective resettlers. The request was promptly granted.¹⁴

The agreements contained detailed provisions for the settlement and employment of the transferred population in their new areas of residence. The resettlement activities were to be carried on by the Lublin committee within Polish territory and by the respective Soviet governments within their own territories. Persons transferred from Polish to Soviet territory could join collective farms, or if they preferred, they could have a piece of land for a separate household not smaller than that which they originally owned so long as it was not in excess of

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 25.

36 acres for a single farm. For other persons conditions were to be created enabling them to obtain work in accordance with their education or special abilities. Persons transferred from the Soviet republics to Poland were, if they desired it, to be assigned to land for individual farming plots under the new agrarian reform instituted by the Lublin committee.

The agreements provided that persons who chose to be transferred would be relieved of paying all their outstanding taxes, insurance premiums, and production quotas within the territory they were leaving. In the territories of their resettlement, the farms allotted to them would be free for two years from all state taxes and insurance fees. The resettlers were to receive a loan of 5,000 zlotys or 5,000 rubles per household, as the case might be, to take care of farm equipment and other needs, repayable over a five-year period. They were to be permitted to take with them their livestock and poultry, in addition to household and farming equipment up to a total of two tons per family. Persons engaged in various professions were to be allowed to take with them the tools or machinery needed to carry on their trade. It was stressed that because of wartime difficulties the transport of furniture by rail and car was forbidden. Movable and immovable property left behind, with the exception of land, would be paid for in accordance with the laws of Poland or the Soviet republics. If the resettlers surrendered their current crops to the state before their departure, they were to be fully reimbursed at the points to which they moved. Those who had carried out their full sowing before moving were to receive similar sown areas of approximately the same size in the places to which they moved.

According to a press dispatch from Moscow, foreign diplomats in the Soviet capital 'interpreted the agreement as an intelligent move on the part of the Soviet government, and one that should do much to strengthen friendly relations between

the Polish people and the USSR.’¹⁵ The Soviet government has apparently endorsed the principle of transferring ethnic population groups as a means of solving intricate territorial and national problems. The transfer agreements with the Reich, concluded in the 1939-41 period, could be interpreted as a temporary expedient dictated by a specific critical conjuncture and following the German pattern. But in this instance, the initiative for the population exchange with Poland evidently came from Moscow and can thus be considered as a part of a deliberate political scheme. The Soviet leaders were trying to remove the very cause of the Polish-Russian border conflict by creating clear ethnic demarcation lines and by eliminating minorities, the mere existence of which would always furnish material for irredentist propaganda and activities.

The proposed exchange of populations was specifically stated to be voluntary. It must, however, be assumed that since both governments agreed that the removal of the respective minorities was desirable and necessary, there could not be much ‘free will’ left for the population groups concerned. Forcible eviction or direct administrative pressure could hardly be expected, but there were various ways of indirectly influencing prospective resettlers which had proved generally efficacious.

Although conceived and worded as treaties on the exchange of population, the Soviet-Polish transfer agreements, if carried out, must have resulted largely in a one-way shift of persons from the Soviet-incorporated former Polish eastern provinces. The number of Russians and White Russians in Poland proper was very small. In July 1942, when the Government General included eastern Galicia, a special issue of the *Europäische Revue* counted only 15,000 White Russians and 6,500 Russians in this area. Of the 4,029,000 Ukrainians,¹⁶ the majority lived in eastern Galicia, which is now incorporated into the Soviet Union. In

¹⁵ *Washington Post*, 5 September 1944.

¹⁶ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 15 July 1942.

western Galicia, some 250,000 Ukrainians lived in the Krakow district, and another 180,000 were scattered over the strip of land beyond the San River. Some 286,000 Ukrainians lived in the Chelm district and in the area between Radzymin and the Bug River in the district of Lublin.¹⁷ In the German-annexed Polish western provinces which have been restored to the re-established Polish state, the number of Ukrainians, Russians, and White Russians was negligible. Thus, no more than some 716,000 settlers could have been expected from the territories remaining with Poland.

In contrast, the Polish population in western Ukraine, western Byelorussia, and the Wilno region was very considerable. According to official Polish statistics, there were 5,274,000 Poles in Soviet-incorporated areas: 2,583,000 in the Ukraine, 2,320,000 in White Russia, and 371,000 in Lithuania.¹⁸ Following the publication of the transfer agreements, Polish sources estimated that at least 6 million would move.¹⁹ These figures and estimates are both grossly exaggerated. There can be no doubt, however, that the number of persons of Polish ethnic nationality to be moved westwards was many times the number of Russians, Ukrainians, and White Russians eligible for transfer eastwards.

A Polish State Office for Repatriation, created in October 1944 to take care of transferred persons until they were finally settled on Polish territory, had by March 1945 established 45 local offices in Poland, and branches in Wilno (Lithuanian SSR), Luck (Ukrainian SSR), and Baranowicze (White Russian SSR).²⁰ Correspondingly, within a month of the signing of the exchange agreements, representatives of the Ukrainian Plenipotentiary Commission had arrived in Lublin, and had set up

¹⁷ Walter Föhl, 'Die Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements,' in *Das Generalgouvernement, seine Verwaltung und seine Wirtschaft*, p. 33.

¹⁸ *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland, September 1939-June 1941*, p. 9.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, 28 October 1944.

²⁰ Polish provisional government broadcast, 12 March 1945.

in the towns of Lublin, Hrubieszów, Chelm, Zamosc, Lisko, Wlodawa, Krasnystaw, Przemysl, Bilgoraj, Lubartów and Tomaszów, offices for the registration of prospective evacuees to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.²¹

Data on the actual transfers and resettlement are surprisingly scarce. *Izvestia* reported on 29 November 1944 the arrival of the first 122 Ukrainian families from Poland in the Kherson area 'where they want to live and work'; they brought with them their belongings, livestock, and poultry and were destined for settlement in the rural Kherson and Veliko-Lepetikhski districts. A Soviet broadcast of 2 December spoke of the arrival of an unspecified number in Lwów and another on 11 January 1945 referred to the arrival of 3,500 families in Zaporozhe. No figures on the repatriation from Poland have been published since then.

As of February 1945, there was no record of any official transfers in the opposite direction, that is, of Poles from the three Soviet republics to Polish territory, although there have been unofficial reports of a spontaneous and unorganized emigration of Poles from the Lwów region. According to a Tass dispatch, the first trainloads of Poles to be transferred from White Russia to Poland left from Baranowicze, Grodno, Stolpce, and Wolkowysk on 12 December, but their numbers were not given and it was stated that representatives of the Polish Repatriation Office were still rounding up Poles in White Russia and arranging for their transfer to Poland.²²

This rather one-sided implementation of the transfer agreements was partly explained by a Soviet wireless commentator on 9 January 1945, according to whom the Lublin authorities had not thought fit, until more space was at their disposal, to hasten the repatriation of the million or so Poles thought to be living in

²¹ *Radio Polskie* (Lublin), 15 and 20 October 1944.

²² *New York Times*, 13 December 1944.

areas east of the Curzon line,²³ but had limited their work mainly to mobilizing men from areas where the anti-Polish sentiment of the Ukrainians was strongest. 'Feeling between the Poles and Ukrainians,' the commentator added, 'has perhaps never run higher than today in those regions where they are in contact.' With the assignment of the former German East Prussia, western Pomerania, Silesia, and the territories bordering on the Oder River to Polish administration, transfer activities appear to have been accelerated. A broadcast of the Polish provisional government on 8 April 1945 stated that between December 1944 and the end of March 1945 about 100,000 persons had been repatriated from the western part of the Soviet Union, but the breakdown of this figure was wholly out of line with the announced total; it spoke of 5,500 from Lithuania, about 5,000 from White Russia, and about 20,000 from the Ukraine, or a total of 30,500 instead of 100,000. The broadcast expressed the hope that 'the coming spring' would see the peak of the repatriation movement.

The possibility of resettling the Polish migrants is inextricably linked to the incorporation into the rebuilt Polish state of German East Prussia, western Pomerania, and Silesia as compensation for the lost eastern territories. The Polish provisional government clearly stated in its 8 April broadcast that

the problem of settling the repatriated population will be solved by placing it in the age-long Polish territories which have now returned to the motherland. . . The repatriated Poles will enjoy magnificent opportunities. Five million hectares [12,355,000 acres] of land are awaiting the Polish peasants in these newly restored territories. Of these, 3 million [7,413,000 acres] used to belong to German counts and barons and 2 million [4,942,000 acres] to German settlers. They are at the disposal of Polish peasants from the USSR and from overpopulated parts of Galicia.

²³ The Polish provisional government estimated the total number of Poles to be repatriated at 2 million. (Polish provisional government broadcast, 8 April 1945.)

Great opportunities are also awaiting Polish workers and intellectuals in trade and in industry.

The newly incorporated former German provinces are largely depopulated because of the flight of a considerable part of the German population. The Polish government has firmly decided to deport the bulk of the remaining Germans to Germany proper. But then they will be faced with the problem of repopulating these areas. Poland's own population resources are scarce. The Warsaw *Rzeczpospolita* of 27 March 1945 in an article entitled 'Reception of Repatriates' stated bluntly that 'the war and the German occupation have exhausted the country in respect to the population; in rebuilding our country we feel acutely the effects of our depleted population.' The newspaper therefore frankly admitted that the problem of repatriation of Poles from the Soviet Union 'has a double aspect; on the one hand it coincides with the wishes of the people east of the Curzon Line; on the other hand, Poland needs these people.' On 24 April 1945, the Polish Home Service announced that the first transport of repatriates, consisting chiefly of country dwellers, had arrived in Opole; they brought with them livestock and agricultural implements and were settled on deserted estates which had belonged to Germans. Many other transports were reported on the way.

III

The German settlements on the Volga River owed their existence to Catherine II. During the persecution of the evangelical church in Germany, German peasants were invited by special manifestos published on 4 December 1762 and 22 July 1763 to settle in the Volga districts which had been badly devastated by a long and bloody struggle with the Tartars. Between 1764 and 1773, some 8,000 families comprising approximately

27,000 persons from Westphalia, Pfalz, Bavaria, Saxony, and Swabia answered these appeals. They were allotted land holdings ranging from 70 to 150 acres, and were guaranteed freedom of worship, as well as an initial remission of taxes.²⁴ As a result of their superior husbandry, they soon outstripped the local Russian and Tartar peasants in acquiring land and other property. Their number increased greatly, and by 1914 there were some 600,000 Germans in the Volga area.²⁵

During World War I, the governmental policy of 1916 directed against German influence in Russia had its effect on the Volga Germans. The Russian government decided to carry out a wholesale transfer in April 1917 of the German colonists from the Volga region, but the outbreak of the revolution in March prevented the execution of this plan. When asked by German organizations to abolish the deportation decree, the revolutionary provisional government under Kerensky agreed only to 'postpone its coming into effect.' It was the Bolshevik government which definitely abrogated the decree.²⁶

As early as 19 October 1918, the Soviet government established a Workers' Commune of Volga Germans, which on 19 December 1923 was re-formed as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Volga Germans. It comprised a territory of 10,329 square miles, of which about three-fourths was situated on the left bank of the Volga River, and the remainder on the right bank. Of a population of 592,900 in 1928, 395,000 or 66.4 per cent were Germans. The census of 1939 showed a very small increase of population during the intervening eleven years, registering only 605,542 inhabitants with the percentage of Germans still about the same. Among the remaining 34 per cent of the population, 20.7 per cent were Russians, 12 per cent Ukrain-

²⁴ Manfred Langhans-Ratzburg, *Die Wolgadeutschen*, pp. 1-21, 153-64; Georg Cleinow, 'Die deutsche Wolga-Republik,' in *Osteuropa*, 1926-7, no. 2-3, pp. 128-9.

²⁵ *Der grosse Brockhaus*, vol. 20, p. 438.

²⁶ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopaedia*, vol. 41, p. 595.

ians, and 1.3 per cent belonged to various other national groups, mainly Tartars.²⁷ During recent years, small groups of Siberian and Central Asiatic tribes were settled in the Volga republic.²⁸

The overwhelming majority of the Volga Germans were peasants. They lived in 300 large and numerous smaller villages. Only 96,000 or 16.7 per cent of the entire population lived in the towns.²⁹ As small landholders, the Volga German peasants were not unsympathetic to the revolution, which broke up the large estates, but they violently resisted Soviet economic policy. Their unwillingness to sow under the new conditions contributed to the great Volga famine in 1922. The New Economic Policy (1922-6), however, suited both their inclinations and their tradition, and during this short interval they prospered, but the collectivization policy of 1930 made them sullen and obstructive again. They slaughtered their cattle and consumed their seed grain. The second Volga famine of 1931-2 was due in part to their passive resistance.

All this discord of a purely economic nature was largely overcome during the last decade. For the most part, the Volga Germans were sovietized in their way of living and working and did not differ much from any other Soviet citizen. By the end of 1937, 99.7 per cent of all the peasant farms were converted into kolkhozes.³⁰ The germs of a deep and far-reaching conflict, however, lay in the ethnic and political ties uniting the Volga Germans with the Third Reich.

Despite the Soviet Union's strict separation of church from state, the Soviet government, by a verbal concordat with Count von Schulenberg, the German Ambassador in Moscow, permitted the German Evangelical Church to maintain contacts and to send missionaries to the Volga republic. *Dienst im Ausland*

²⁷ *Deutsche Zeitung*, 18 October 1938; Richter, *Aus der Wolgadeutschen Sowjet Republik*, pp. 5-6, 12 ff.

²⁸ *Neue Volkszeitung*, 18 October 1941.

²⁹ *Bolskaya Sovetskaya Encyclopaedia*, vol. 41, p. 600.

³⁰ *Ibid.* vol. 41, p. 600.

(DIA), a propaganda organization for Germans abroad, used these missionaries and their religious tracts for disseminating secret Nazi propaganda. Even among the Volga traveling theaters that toured collective farms, actors were discovered to be in the employ of DIA. Espionage reached such proportions that the concordat was abolished, the head of the German Evangelical Church in Leningrad arrested and convicted of treason, and a round-up of German spies was made. As a preliminary precaution several small German colonies near Odessa and the Dnieper were transferred elsewhere.³¹ The Volga Germans, however, remained unaffected by these measures. They were considered loyal and reliable Soviet citizens. In November 1939, when the Soviet-German agreement for the transfer of Germans from Wolhynia, eastern Galicia, and the Narew area was signed, the Soviets made a special point of the fact that the Volga Germans were in no way involved in this transaction.

During the first two and a half months of the German-Soviet war there was no mention of the Volga Germans. Their attitude and behavior in the armed conflict between their German fatherland and the country of their residence was unknown to the outside world. Only in August 1941 was it made public that the Soviet Supreme Council had decided to remove the total German population of the Volga region to Siberia and Soviet Central Asia. This decision was apparently taken under the pressure of the Soviet retreat in the south, the German offensive against Moscow, and the intention and need to make Kuibyshev on the Volga, northeast of the German Volga republic, the administrative center of the Volga-Ural defense region and the residence of the Soviet government.

A decree on the resettlement of the Germans living in the Volga districts, signed at the Kremlin on 28 August 1941 and made public on 8 September, read as follows:

³¹ Edelman, *How Russia Prepared*, pp. 30-31.

According to reliable information received by military authorities, there are thousands and tens of thousands of diversionists and spies among the German population of the Volga region who are prepared to cause explosions in these regions at a signal from Germany. No Germans [living in the Volga districts] ever reported to Soviet authorities the presence of such great numbers of diversionists and spies. Therefore, the German population of the Volga regions are covering up enemies of the Soviet people and the Soviet power. If diversionist acts were to take place under orders of Germany by German diversionists and spies in the Volga German republic or neighboring regions and there were bloodshed, the Soviet government would be forced according to martial law to adopt measures of reprisal against the entire German population. In order to avoid such undesirable occurrences and to forestall serious bloodshed, the presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR has found it necessary to resettle the entire German population of the Volga regions under the condition that the resettlers are allotted land and given state aid to settle in new regions. Resettled Germans will be given land in the Novo-Sibirsk and Omsk districts, the Altay region, the Kazakstan Republic and neighboring localities rich in land. In connection with this, the National Defense Council is instructed to resettle as soon as possible all Volga Germans, who will be given land estates in new regions.³²

This announcement was closely followed by action. 'Towards the end of August 1941,' reported Maurice Edelman in his booklet, *How Russia Prepared*, 'a mournful procession of refugees filled the roads leading to the railway stations of the Middle Volga, four hundred thousand of them, carrying bedding, dragging domestic animals, the women weeping, all with bitterness on their faces of those who have been driven from their homes. . . They were German refugees, the German settlers of the German Autonomous Volga Republic, expelled by decree of the Soviet Government to Siberia.'³³

The Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Volga Germans

³² *New York Times*, 9 September 1941.

³³ Edelman, op. cit. p. 31.

was abolished. A decree dated 7 September 1941 provided for the inclusion of 15 districts of the former Volga republic into the Saratov region, while 7 other districts were incorporated into the Stalingrad region.

There is no information about the fate of the transferred Volga Germans in the new areas of their settlement. They were sent to regions where they could find many co-nationals. Even in 1927 German sources spoke of 253 German colonies in Siberia and Soviet Central Asia, composed mainly of resettlers from older German settlements in the Ukraine and the Volga area.³⁴ The number of Germans in Siberia was estimated at 100,000. In the districts of Omsk and Slavgorod, the Soviet government created several German administrative units.³⁵

It must be noted that mass transplantations of population were not an innovation in Soviet practice. In a study of Soviet foreign policy, David J. Dallin recalls that in the 1930's the Soviet government for one reason or another repeatedly shifted large groups of the population. In 1935 whole villages were moved from the Finnish frontier as a defense measure; for the same reason, apparently, a large number of persons living near the Soviet-Polish frontier were removed; and in the 1931-4 period, at the height of collectivization of Soviet agriculture, hundreds of thousands of well-to-do peasants, the so-called kulaks, were sent to the North and to the East.³⁶

IV

By a treaty signed in Moscow on 29 June 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded to the Soviet Union her easternmost province of Carpatho-Ukraine, an area of 5,500 square miles with a popu-

³⁴ Helmut Anger, 'Vom Deutschtum in Sibirien,' in *Osteuropa*, 1927, no. 10, pp. 589-94.

³⁵ *Neue Volkszeitung*, 18 October 1941.

³⁶ Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy*, 1939-1942, pp. 94-5.

lation of 850,000. The protocol appended to the treaty contains detailed provisions for an exchange of population between the two countries. For the first time in the history of Soviet population transfers, these terms have been published in full.³⁷

Persons of Ukrainian and Russian nationality living in Czechoslovak territory have the right to opt for Soviet citizenship until 1 January 1946, while Czech and Slovak nationals residing or having their permanent domicile in the territory of the Carpatho-Ukraine have the right to opt for Czechoslovak nationality within the same period. Opting is to proceed in accordance with existing laws of the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Republic, respectively, and becomes valid on receipt of the agreement of authorities of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, respectively. Persons with the right of option are to move into the state whose nationality they intend to acquire within twelve months of gaining the consent of the relevant government. They are permitted to take with them their movable goods free of customs duties, and are to be compensated for the value of their immovable goods. Compensation is also to be given to persons of Slovak or Czech nationality who have been forced to leave the territory of the Carpatho-Ukraine through enemy occupation. In this group are included also juridical persons who should be considered Czechs or Slovaks from a point of view of legal rights existing before the occupation. Representatives of both the contracting parties are to decide on reimbursement of the transferees for the property they abandon, and liquidation of all reimbursement and repayment of divergencies are to be completed within eighteen months after the ratification of the treaty.

The number of persons affected by the projected population exchange totals approximately 125,000. According to the Czechoslovak Nationality Census of 1930, there were 33,961 persons

³⁷ *New York Times*, 30 June 1945.

of Czech or Slovak ethnic nationality in Carpatho-Ukraine. The number of persons of Ukrainian and Russian ethnic nationality in parts of Czechoslovakia other than Carpatho-Ukraine was 91,079.⁸⁸ It is unlikely that since 1930 these figures have altered to any considerable degree.

⁸⁸ *Annuaire Statistique de la République Tchécho-Slovaque*, p. 7.

XXVI

Finnish Transfer Policy

I

THE first war between Finland and the Soviet Union, known as the Winter War, started on 30 November 1939. It ended in a collapse of Finnish defenses, and on 12 March 1940 a peace treaty was signed in Moscow by the terms of which Finland was forced to cede the whole Karelian Isthmus and the region around Lake Ladoga.

The Moscow treaty permitted persons desiring to leave the ceded territory to do so within a very brief period. Two days after the conclusion of the treaty, Jaho Koivisto, Finnish Assistant Minister of Agriculture, stated that only 1 per cent of the Karelian population had decided to remain under Soviet rule.¹ Risto Ryti, President of the Finnish Republic, declared in a speech in Turku (Åbo), recorded by the official Finnish broadcast of 6 December 1943, that 'only 20 people remained voluntarily to live under the Russian regime.'

The total number of Karelian evacuees is generally placed at 450,000, but this figure considerably exceeds the number of persons who actually transferred their residence from Karelia to Finland proper. The Finnish Ministry of Social Works placed the total prewar population of the ceded Karelian territory (Karelian Isthmus and Ladoga Karelia) at only some 420,000.² But the number of refugees was even slightly below this figure. Official Finnish statistics, published in January 1945, placed the

¹ *New York Times*, 15 March 1940.

² *Social Tidskrift*, no. 9-10.

total at 415,000.³ This would indicate that some 5,000 Karelians remained under the Soviet regime.

Another prevailing misconception is that the transfer of this mass of people was effectuated with one stroke within the amazingly brief period between 14 and 27 March 1940.⁴ The official data cited above, however, stated that 97,000 were evacuated during hostilities, and 318,000 after the signing of the Moscow treaty.

During the short period of time allotted to the refugees between the conclusion of the treaty and the evacuation deadline, persons who had previously left Karelia were permitted to return home for the purpose of assembling their possessions. According to Eljas Kahra, the evacuees 'had very little opportunity to take any kind of property with them. Their cattle had already been evacuated; but apart from that, all that could be saved was perhaps their money, but very little else.'⁵

II

The resettlement of some 400,000 persons and their economic reintegration presented a difficult task for a nation with a total population of only 3.8 million. It had been decided to settle the inhabitants of the Karelian Isthmus, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the evacuees, in Central Finland, and to install the population of the Ladoga coast in Vaasa on the Gulf of Bothnia. The refugees, however, insisted that they be settled in Southern Finland. They stubbornly opposed resettlement on new land in more northern regions, despite the fact that conditions in the densely populated south were less favorable for their colonization. The installation of the Karelian refu-

³ Transocean broadcast, 23 January 1945.

⁴ *New York Times*, 15, 16, 22, and 28 March 1940.

⁵ Eljas Kahra, 'Reconstruction in Finland,' in *International Labour Review*, May 1941, p. 503.

gees in this area meant a further subdivision of the already intensively cultivated land of this region.⁶

Nevertheless, it seems that the demands of the Karelians were met, at least in part, and many of them were settled in Southern Finland. It has been reported that entire Karelian communities were installed in the province of Nyland, bordering the Gulf of Finland.⁷ This colonization, as well as the resettlement of the Ladoga Karelians on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, evoked violent opposition from the Swedish-speaking population of these areas. The Finnish Swedes, who constitute 10 per cent of the population of Finland, are settled mainly in the southwestern sections of the country. They feared that an increase of the Finnish element in this almost purely Swedish area would encroach on their interests,⁸ and they also suspected that the Finns, through the introduction of so large a Finnish element, intended to transform this region into a bilingual area.⁹

Owing to the occupational structure of the evacuee group, the problem of resettlement was twofold. About 200,000 of the repatriates were rural elements.¹⁰ The settlement of this group on the land was facilitated by the Finnish Parliament's passage of a bill in June 1940, under the terms of which any adult Finnish citizen transferred from an area bordering the new national frontier, and who had in the past derived a livelihood from the land or from fishing, was entitled to a priority right in accordance with the existing Land Settlement Act, as well as to loans issued out of land settlement funds.¹¹ Property designated for this purpose in each locality was primarily state land. The settle-

⁶ *Geographische Zeitschrift*, 1941, no. 3, pp. 193-4.

⁷ Alfred Thoss, 'Umsiedlungen und Optionen im Rahmen der Neuordnung Europas,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, March 1941, p. 134.

⁸ *Geographische Zeitschrift* (cited above), pp. 193-4.

⁹ Thoss, 'Umsiedlungen . . .' (cited above), p. 134.

¹⁰ 'Bauernsiedlung in Finnland,' in *Deutsche Agrarpolitik*, September 1943, no. 12, p. 380.

¹¹ Kahra, op. cit. pp. 507-9.

ment procedure was greatly simplified by the fact that 40 per cent of Finland's territory belonged to the state.¹² In districts where the state-owned land was inappropriate or insufficient, the necessary property was obtained first through voluntary transfer by private owners, and, as a last resort, by the expropriation of land belonging to churches, communities, corporations, and various other organizations, or to persons deriving their main income from non-agricultural occupations.

The resettlement scheme provided for the creation of 38,818 new holdings, for which purpose 818,528 acres of land already cultivated or arable were needed. The authorities responsible for housing, feeding, and resettling the evacuees were granted 800 million Finnish marks for the task.¹³ By the end of 1940, after only four months of activity, 6,678 new holdings had been created, and 4,208 more had been staked off. These figures do not include holdings acquired by evacuated farmers through private purchases financed by state funds.¹⁴

Some 50 per cent of the evacuees were persons who had previously earned a living from industry, commerce, the handicrafts, the liberal professions, building, and other trades. The task of providing a means of livelihood for this section of the population was particularly difficult in 1940, because Finland's trade had been crippled by the fact that her lanes of commerce lay directly in the war zone. Industry on the Finnish side of the new frontier was finding it hard to provide work for its own labor force, and there was little opportunity left for the evacuees. It was therefore necessary to retrain workers for other branches of activity. As a stopgap, they were given employment on vari-

¹² Jean Buhler, 'Reconstruction en Finlande,' in *Gazette de Lausanne*, 22 January 1941.

¹³ Martin R. Schmidt, 'Stand der Finnischen Umsiedlung,' in *Neues Bauerntum*, May 1941, p. 205.

¹⁴ Kahra, op. cit. pp. 507-9. There are no figures available for 1941, which may be explained by the fact that since the autumn of 1941 the return movement to Karelia has been in progress.

ous kinds of state-organized projects, such as road, bridge, and railway construction.¹⁵

The Finnish Parliament granted 3 billion marks for the compensation of evacuees for property left in Karelia. Full compensation was projected only for values not exceeding 320,000 marks; not more than 10,000 marks could be paid in cash.¹⁶

On the whole, the resettlement work progressed smoothly, and there was good reason to anticipate its successful completion by the end of 1941.¹⁷

III

Resettlement of the evacuated Karelians was interrupted in June 1941 when hostilities between Finland and the Soviet Union broke out again. The Finns quickly recaptured Viborg (Viipuri), the Karelian Isthmus, and Ladoga Karelia, and the return movement of the evacuees began that fall.¹⁸ It was a spontaneous action on the part of persons merely waiting for permission to go home. The Finnish authorities encouraged and supported this movement, and immediately set about the rebuilding of abandoned houses and the restoration of agricultural activity.¹⁹

By the end of 1941 some 77,000 Karelians had returned. A second wave of Karelians was repatriated in the spring of 1942.²⁰ On 3 September 1943, *Karjala* reported that as of that date there were 265,000 Karelians living in the reconquered territories. Subsequent repatriation, however, must have been on a small scale, since at the end of April 1944, when the repatriation was

¹⁵ Buhler, op. cit.

¹⁶ Schmidt, op. cit. p. 205.

¹⁷ *Finnland von Krieg zu Krieg*, p. 49.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, 28 October 1941; *News from Finland*, 13 March 1943.

¹⁹ 'Wiederaufbau Kareliens,' in *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft*, no. 5, February 1943.

²⁰ *News from Finland*, 26 January 1943.

well past, there were still 110,578 Karelians in Finland proper.²¹

The slackened pace of the repatriation may be attributed largely to the continued hostilities. The majority of the returning refugees went to Ladoga Karelia and to the central part of the Karelian Isthmus, and at the beginning of 1943, some communities in these areas had recovered as much as 90 per cent of their prewar population. But along the coast of the isthmus and the frontier, in areas where the fighting still raged, only a small proportion of the inhabitants returned.

Another hindrance to the continued repatriation was the housing problem. During the Winter War, 70,000 houses had been totally destroyed and 40,000 damaged.²² By August 1943, however, 8,500 new buildings had been completed, and 60 per cent of the arable land was again under cultivation.²³

The wholesale evacuation of the 400,000 Karelians in 1940 and the return of some 265,000 before September 1943 by no means settled the fate of the population of this hotly disputed territory. Victorious Soviet Russia reincorporated Karelia, and the Karelians again had to leave their homes for Finland proper. On 18 June 1944, the Finnish Premier, Edwin Linkomies, stated in a speech broadcast by the Finnish Home Service that 'the hard-hit Karelian people for a second time, with the quiet unconquerable spirit of the borderer, have to leave their only recently rebuilt homes and recently sown fields.' The evacuation proceeded under a military regime, but civilian authorities were responsible for lodgings and other details. Special roads were used by the evacuees in order to free the main highways for the military.²⁴

The Finnish Assistant Minister for the Interior, Emil Luukka, stated on 13 September that about 250,000 Karelians had been

²¹ *Uusi Suomi*, 29 April 1944.

²² *News from Finland*, 26 February 1943.

²³ Transocean broadcast, 23 August 1943.

²⁴ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 15 July 1944.

evacuated from the area of military operations. Some of them were able to take all their cattle and some of their property, but others could take only a fraction of their belongings. The evacuated Karelians were sent to the counties of Mikkeli, Kuopio, Häme, Vaasa, Turku, and Oulu. They were promised, however, that in the event of peace a sort of counterbalancing evacuation would be effected and that they would then be directed to the most suitable places.²⁵ A conference of representatives of Karelian municipalities and various organizations, which took place on 5 September in Helsinki, demanded that the evacuated Karelian farmers should immediately be provided with the land necessary for the continuation of their farming, and that the evacuees should also be given compensation for lost property to enable them to procure new farms and equipment.²⁶

Relations between the newcomers and the residents of the areas to which they were sent were apparently not very cordial. There were complaints of a lack of sympathy toward the people who had been twice driven from their homes. The Board of Education had to appeal to all elementary school inspectors to help the Karelians by exhorting the local inhabitants to be friendly toward them. On the other hand, the Finnish Swedes argued that the method of billeting the evacuees was unsuccessful, that the language differences did not permit smooth and friendly intercourse, and that the guests showed no ability to adapt themselves to the customs of the provinces.²⁷

The absorption of the mass of Karelians undoubtedly poses a difficult problem for Finland. It may, however, in the long run, prove beneficial to Finland's economy by compensating for the population losses suffered during the war. Finnish casualties during the Winter War were estimated at 66,000 men, of whom

²⁵ *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 13 September 1944.

²⁶ *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå* (Swedish News Agency), 6 September 1944.

²⁷ *Vasabladet*, 15 August 1944; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 10 September 1944.

23,000 were killed. There is no official information on the Finnish losses in the second war, but they are said to be equal to if not in excess of those of the first.²⁸

IV

During the war the population losses were partially balanced by the transfer of Ingermanlanders. The Ingermanland area, conquered by Peter the Great from the Swedes in 1704, is situated between Lake Ladoga, the Gulf of Finland, the Neva River, the Narva River, and the old provinces of Pskov and Novgorod. After the Bolshevik revolution, the Ingermanland area was incorporated within the new and much larger Leningrad province. The entire province contained a Finnish population of some 150,000, concentrated mainly in the districts around the city of Leningrad and in the far northern regions of Polyarnoye and Kolsky in the Murmansk region.

In the summer of 1943 press reports referred to the evacuation to Finland of 'Ingermanlanders' (or Ingri, or Ijora, or Inkeri, or Inkerikot), a Finnish folk group of Karelian stock, numbering 16,000 persons and living in the Kingissepp district on the lower part of the River Luga, and along the coast of the Gulf of Finland bordering Estonia, in the Leningrad province. In using the term 'Ingermanlanders,' these reports referred not only to some 16,000 Ingri, but to all the population of Finnish origin scattered throughout the entire Leningrad area. *Uusi Suomi* of 30 June 1943 stated that 150,000 persons were involved in the Ingermanland transfer project, which implies that this was no casual and isolated undertaking, but rather the result of a firmly established policy of the Finnish government, aiming at the repatriation of the population of Finnish stock from the adjacent Soviet territory.

The Germans, however, blocked the fulfilment of these broad

²⁸ *Berlingske Tidende*, 26 July 1943.

plans. As early as 1 December 1942, *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, reporting the Finnish government decision to transfer the Ingermanlanders to Finland, noted that 'in the meanwhile the Germans had started the mobilization of manpower in occupied countries and would not agree to the complete transfer.' The reasons for the German opposition are understandable in the light of the fact that some 78,000 Ingermanlanders were evacuated to German-held territory where they furnished considerable manpower for the Reich.²⁹ From the Finnish point of view, negotiations with the Germans were only partially successful. Professor Pentti Kaitera, head of the Finnish repatriation office, stated that among the 14,000 Ingermanlanders who had been transferred to Finland by July 1943, there were 2,700 men, 5,900 women, and 5,400 children. Those released by the Germans were mainly women and children, while male adults able to work were retained by the German authorities in Germany or German-occupied territory.³⁰ *Ajan Suunta* stressed the fact that not all the Ingermanlanders were able-bodied, and concluded that their transfer had only partly alleviated the acute labor shortage in Finland.³¹

Thus only a small number of these repatriates came to Finland directly from the Ingermanland area. The majority came via Estonia, to which, according to the German monthly, *Ostland*, 16,000 Ingermanlanders had either fled because of the appalling food shortages or had been transferred by April 1943.³² Their transfer to Finland was organized by a local Finnish bureau in co-operation with the German occupation authorities.³³

The question of transferring to Finland the Ingermanlanders who had been removed to Germany proper for labor appears

²⁹ *Dagens Nyheter*, 25 June 1943.

³⁰ *Aftonbladet*, 7 July 1943.

³¹ *Ajan Suunta*, 8 July 1943.

³² *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 June 1943.

³³ *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, 1 July 1943.

to have been much more complicated. The *Stockholms-Tidningen* of 5 July 1943 reported that Professor Kaitera was then in Germany, trying to arrange for the transfer of all Ingermanlanders to Finland. On his return, he declared that the transfers were being discontinued for the present, but expressed the hope that they would be resumed in the autumn.³⁴

The correspondent of the *Turun Sanomat*, who interviewed several transferred Ingermanlanders, stressed the voluntary character of the transfer.³⁵ The evacuees received no compensation for their land, but were allowed to sell their possessions.³⁶ After their arrival in Finland, they were placed in quarantine camps for three weeks. Most of them were then sent with their families to be settled on farms.³⁷ By the summer of 1943, 85 per cent of those who had been transferred had already obtained employment in Finland.³⁸ The majority had been resettled as agriculturists, although some had also found employment in industry. About 843 were receiving state aid.³⁹

A second transfer of Ingermanlanders, involving 14,290 persons, took place in the autumn of 1943. Of this number 20 per cent were men, 47 per cent were women, and 33 per cent were children. Despite the predominance of women and children, it was expected that a considerable number of this group would be placed in industry, as well as in agriculture.⁴⁰ On 5 December, it was reported that the number of Ingermanlanders already transferred to Finland had reached 53,000.⁴¹ This would indicate that in the period between the autumn and December of 1943, a third contingent of some 25,000 Ingermanlanders had

³⁴ *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 8 July 1943.

³⁵ *Turun Sanomat*, 29 July 1943.

³⁶ *Social Demokraten*, 23 June 1943.

³⁷ *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, 1 July 1943.

³⁸ *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 November 1943.

³⁹ *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 24 October 1943.

⁴⁰ *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, 16 November 1943.

⁴¹ *Kaiku*, 5 December 1943.

been repatriated. In May 1944, the number of Ingermanlanders in Finland reached 65,000.⁴²

V

The original Soviet-Finnish peace terms demanded the immediate repatriation of all Soviet prisoners of war and civilians now in Finland. The Finnish government feared that this demand included the surrender of transferred Ingermanlanders, but the Soviet reply to the Finnish request for clarification of this point made it plain that was not the case.⁴³

The Soviet authorities, however, soon noticed the dearth of population in the liberated Ingermanland area, and in November 1944, the Soviet Control Commission in Finland published in the Finnish press a summons to Soviet citizens to return to the Soviet Union. This invitation referred to the Ingermanlanders and also to Estonians who have taken refuge in Finland.⁴⁴ From 46,000 to 47,000 Ingermanlanders applied for repatriation. The first contingent of 1,500 left on 5 December 1944, and the whole return operation was scheduled for completion by the end of January 1945.⁴⁵ Only some 18,000 to 19,000 decided to remain in Finland.

The surprisingly high percentage of Ingermanlanders who opted for a return to the Soviet Union can be explained by the considerable difficulties they encountered in their integration into the Finnish community. Although their language is more like that of the area of Finland to which they were evacuated than the language spoken by the Karelians,⁴⁶ and although the first contingents of Ingermanlanders in Finland easily established

⁴² *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 10 May 1944.

⁴³ Ibid. 16 March 1944; *Svenska Dagbladet*, 16 March 1944.

⁴⁴ *Valis Eesti*, 12 November 1944.

⁴⁵ Finnish Home Service broadcast, 5 December 1945.

⁴⁶ *Morgon-Tidningen Social Demokraten*, 1 November 1943.

themselves,⁴⁷ early in 1944 Professor Kaitera cautiously stated that 'despite all the positive factors, some negative ones have also appeared . . . we have noticed that not all Finns assume the proper attitude towards those who have suffered from the war.'⁴⁸ The prominent Finnish liberal of Swedish extraction and a former cabinet member, Ernst von Born, bluntly declared in May 1944 that 'it should not be necessary always to quarter Ingermanlanders in places where the people do not want them,'⁴⁹ and on 2 June 1944 the Swedish daily in Finland, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, openly accused the Ingermanlanders of being 'infected by the Bolshevist poison.'

In these circumstances it seems natural that the overwhelming majority of the Ingermanlanders should have preferred to leave the rather inhospitable Finnish shores when the Soviet Union called for their repatriation. There are no data concerning the progress of their reinstallation in their former homeland.

⁴⁷ By December 1943, 19,496 of the first group of 20,945 Ingermanlander refugees were earning their living. (*Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, 23 December 1943.)

⁴⁸ *Karjala*, 23 January 1944.

⁴⁹ *Svenska Pressen*, 23 May 1944.

XXVII

Repatriation of the Estonian Swedes

THE Swedish minority in Estonia, which numbered 7,800 or 0.7 per cent of the total population of the country, according to the census of 1930, was concentrated mainly on the islands along the Estonian coast. Their chief occupation was agriculture, although many of them were fishermen and sailors. Under the Estonian law of 8 June 1925, this group enjoyed wide cultural autonomy.¹

Following the conclusion of the Soviet-Estonian mutual assistance pact on 29 September 1939, the Soviet Union established numerous military bases on the Estonian mainland, as well as on the neighboring islands in the Baltic Sea. This change in the political and military situation soon affected the Estonian Swedes living on these islands. At the end of February 1940, the official French news agency, Havas, reported from Tallinn: 'Persons of Swedish origin residing on the islands facing the Baltic port have been ordered to leave. The Soviet government which is establishing military bases in the Baltic states demands this evacuation in view of the strategic importance of these islands. 350 persons are affected by this measure. In compliance with the request of the Estonian government, the evacuation has been postponed until spring.'²

But when Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union, the latter went through with the removal of the island inhabitants. The Swedish Ambassador in Moscow succeeded in reaching an agreement with the Soviet authorities concerning the re-

¹ Hjalma Pöhl, 'Die Estlandschweden,' in *Nation und Staat*, July-August 1938, pp. 596-9.

² *Posledniya Novosti*, 1 March 1940.

patriation of the Swedes.³ On 15 October, Havas reported the evacuation of about 500 persons from the islands under the terms of the Soviet-Swedish agreement.⁴ The evacuees were mainly fishermen and have since settled in the Stockholm archipelago, where they have successfully maintained a livelihood.⁵

The Germans occupied Estonia in July 1941, and those inhabitants of the Estonian islands who had not actually been transferred to Sweden were allowed to return home by the German occupation authorities. The official German policy toward the Estonian Swedes, as stated in May 1943 by the German Commissioner General for Estonia, SA Oberguppenführer Lietzman, was to give 'the Swedish racial groups in Estonia the possibility of free development according to their inclination.' The Swedes were permitted to support their own public schools where Swedish was taught, a trade school, and a Gymnasium.⁶ A rather different picture, however, was presented by the Swedish press. A Swedish scientist, resident in Estonia during both the Russian and German occupations, wrote a long article on Estonian Swedes for *Dagens Nyheter*, in which he stated that the entire Swedish colony had been forced to register for German service, and that all Swedish-owned boats had been confiscated.⁷ An earlier article in the same newspaper reported that both the male and female Swedish population of the islands of Ragö, Vormsi, and Runo, off the Estonian coast, where the population was predominantly Swedish, had been conscripted for labor service by the Germans many months before. Many had fled the country in small boats, several of which had reached Sweden or Finland. It has been estimated that during the summer of

³ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 September 1940.

⁴ *Posledniya Novosti*, 6 October 1940.

⁵ Stockholm broadcast in English to Europe and North America, recorded by the Federal Communications Commission Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, 17 October 1943.

⁶ Transocean broadcast, 6 May 1943.

⁷ *Svenska Pressen*, 5 October 1943.

1943, some 600 Estonian Swedes, mostly youths, escaped from Estonia; 60 persons left the country illegally during September.⁸ Several boats were sunk by German patrols.⁹

At this same time, a legal evacuation of Estonian Swedes was also in progress. It started with the repatriation of small Swedish groups. In 1942, two Swedish delegations were sent to the Swedish settlements in Estonia to investigate conditions there. Negotiations for the transfer to Sweden of sick Estonian Swedes with close relatives in Sweden were successfully concluded at the beginning of 1943. It is very likely that many of the Estonian Swedes who were not actually ill managed to take advantage of this transfer agreement.

After the autumn of 1943, the legal repatriation of Estonian Swedes assumed extensive proportions, with the German authorities in Estonia and the Swedish government-sponsored Committee for Ragö Swedes co-operating in this evacuation. Major Carl Mothander, representative of a Swedish commission for the assistance of Estonian Swedes, expressed the conviction that 'whether total or partial evacuation is decided upon will depend entirely on the Swedish government's attitude to the problem.' He also stressed that 'the desire of Estonian Swedes to return home has increased under the pressure of circumstances, and has reached the point of desperation in many cases.'¹⁰

At the beginning of October 1943, the Stockholm Committee for the Ragö Swedes concluded an agreement with the German authorities in Estonia whereby at least 700 Estonian Swedes were to be repatriated before the end of autumn.¹¹ On 9 October it was reported that the German Ministry for the East had granted exit permits to the first group of 400. Of this number the majority were sick people, or married persons over 60 whose adult

⁸ *Aftonbladet*, 9 October 1943.

⁹ *Social Demokraten*, 6 September 1943.

¹⁰ *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 September 1943.

¹¹ *Aftonbladet*, 12 October 1943.

children had migrated legally from Estonia and had been living in Sweden for more than two years. This figure, however, accounted for only a third of the 1,200 Estonian Swedes claiming repatriation.¹² The committee continued negotiations for the evacuation of at least 700 more Swedes¹³ and approached the Swedish government for a grant of 150,000 kroner to finance the transportation of the initial 600 to 700 scheduled for repatriation before the end of autumn.¹⁴ *Aftonbladet* of 12 October wrote that 'it is no exaggeration to say that almost all Estonian Swedes are glad of the opportunity of emigrating to Sweden' and that 'the Germans are likely to agree, provided that Sweden arranges the necessary transport.'

According to the German census of 1 December 1942, there were at that time 6,487 persons of Swedish stock in Estonia.¹⁵ By October 1944, some 6,450 Swedish repatriates from Estonia were counted in Sweden.¹⁶ Thus it may be assumed that after 400 years of existence in that country, the Swedish minority group has practically disappeared from Estonia. 'Of the Swedish colonies in Estonia and Latvia practically no one is left,' *Dagens Nyheter* reported on 12 November 1944.

The transferred Estonian Swedes easily found their place in the Swedish community. By December 1944, 5,500 had been assigned suitable work through the labor exchange. Of these, 70 per cent were employed in agriculture, country households, and fisheries, about 10 per cent in minor shipbuilding yards, and the remaining 20 per cent in household work, the textile industry and workshops. About 600 persons were placed in various homes for old people.¹⁷

¹² Ibid. 9 October 1943.

¹³ *Aftonidningen*, 8 October 1943.

¹⁴ Transocean broadcast (for the Far East), 9 October 1943.

¹⁵ Transocean broadcast, 6 May 1943.

¹⁶ *Dagsposten*, 5 October 1944.

¹⁷ *Expressen*, 4 December 1944.

XXVIII

The Bulgarian-Romanian Exchange of Population

I

FOR thirty years the Dobruja has played an important part in the disturbance of Europe—its influence has been vaster than many thinking people realize,' wrote Bernard Newman,¹ in what is far from an overstatement of the case. The Congress of Berlin of 1878, which followed the Russian-Turkish war, allotted the northern part of Dobruja (5,948 square miles) to Romania as compensation for southern Bessarabia (2,927 square miles), which had been ceded to Russia. Romanians formed only a minority in this area, but they began energetically to colonize their new province. At the time this was easily accomplished without injury to the Bulgar majority, since thousands of Turks, who had settled in large numbers in Dobruja during the period of Ottoman domination, left the country after its incorporation into Romania. Southern Dobruja was turned over to Bulgaria.

The Treaty of Bucharest of 1913, which concluded the war between Bulgaria and the three other Balkan states, ceded Southern Dobruja to Romania. During World War I, Dobruja was handed over to Bulgaria again by the Central Powers, but after the German collapse, it was returned to Romania by the Treaty of Neuilly.

In 1940, following the Soviet annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Bulgaria presented her claim for Dobruja. Romania sought Axis protection but was advised to agree to a

¹ Newman, *The New Europe*, p. 270.

settlement. Thus, on 7 September 1940, in Craiova, a Bulgarian-Romanian treaty was concluded,² providing for the cession of Southern Dobruja (an area of 2,982 square miles with a population of 378,344) to Bulgaria, and for a compulsory exchange of population: The Bulgarians of the Northern Dobruja districts of Tulcea and Constantza were to be transferred to Bulgaria, and the Romanians of the Southern Dobruja districts of Durostor and Kali Akra were to be sent to Romania. The transfer was to be effectuated within three months. Bulgaria undertook to pay Romania a blanket sum of 450 million leva as compensation for improvements made in Southern Dobruja by the Romanians and in settlement of all other claims. Romania agreed to pay Bulgarians in both Northern and Southern Dobruja for losses from requisitioning by the Romanian army.

This settlement of an old and painful territorial and ethnic quarrel between Bulgaria and Romania may be considered final. The armistice concluded with Romania on 12 September 1944 by the Allied powers, which won the return of Northern Transylvania to Romanian sovereignty, did not mention Southern Dobruja. Nor was Dobruja mentioned in the armistice signed with Bulgaria on 28 October. Evidently Bulgaria is to retain the southern part of the Dobruja territory.

The official exchange of populations began on 7 November 1940 and was completed by 14 December as stipulated. During the transfer operations there occurred a series of conflicts between the Romanian and Bulgarian governments in regard to the number of persons in each country subject to evacuation. Oddly enough, each government was anxious to receive only the minimum of blood brethren rather than the maximum. The German *Südost-Economist* (Budapest) of 28 February 1941, which frequently voiced the official Bulgarian point of view, com-

² The full text of the treaty and of the subsequent agreement on the exchange of population were published in *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, November 1940, pp. 802-4.

plained that although at Craiova the Romanian authorities had spoken of 55,000 Bulgarians to be evacuated from Northern Dobruja, they later presented a list of 74,451 persons subject to evacuation. The Bulgarian authorities objected, claiming that among this number there were many Greeks, Russians, and members of other ethnic groups, who were not entitled to resettlement in Bulgarian Southern Dobruja. After a careful recount, it was ascertained that there were 66,800 Bulgarians in Romanian Dobruja. This figure still considerably exceeded the one mentioned by the Romanian government at Craiova, and the Bulgarian government at first refused to admit more than the original number. It agreed finally to accept 60,000, and proposed the conclusion of a new agreement to cover the remaining 6,800 certified Bulgarians. The Romanian government rejected this proposal, and the *Südost-Economist* of 28 February 1941 reported that 'the Bulgarian government had to leave these 6,800 in Northern Dobruja,' thereby making it appear that Bulgaria had made a concession to Romanian implacability.

Further conflict arose with regard to the 60,000 Bulgarians whom the Bulgarian government agreed to admit. The Bulgarian authorities asserted that by 14 December 1940, 60,500 Bulgarians had crossed the frontier, while the Romanians claimed that the number was only 57,500. The Romanian authorities resolved this conflict by placing the Bulgarian population of two villages in waiting trains and taking them over the frontier. Faced with a *fait accompli*, the Bulgarian government finally decided to admit these 3,000 additional evacuees.³

According to an official Romanian report covering three years of the Antonescu government (1940-43), about 15,000 families comprising some 61,000 persons left Northern Dobruja between 15 October and 14 December 1940.⁴ The evacuated peasants came in carts from 265 villages; some were shipped from Con-

³ *Südost-Economist*, 28 February 1941.

⁴ *Trei Ani de Guvernare*, p. 149.

stantsa. They took with them 18,500 horses, 3,500 pigs, 215,000 sheep, 12,500 horned cattle, and 12,000 small cattle.⁵

Dissensions that had far-reaching consequences developed between the Bulgarian and Romanian governments with regard to the property left behind by the Bulgarian evacuees in Northern Dobruja. The Craiova treaty (Articles 4, 5 and 6) provided that persons leaving their actual residence under the terms of the treaty be allowed to export their movable property, cattle, agricultural implements, and the like, free of duty. Real estate left behind became property of the state. The value of property and possessions was to be appraised by a mixed Romanian-Bulgarian commission on the basis of an inventory presented by the prospective evacuee (Article 10). Mutual claims thus amassed were to be settled between Romania and Bulgaria by compensation from state to state. Each state undertook to reimburse its repatriates for the agricultural property left behind (Article 5). Property left behind in the towns remained the individual property of its actual proprietor (Article 4).

The application of these provisions led to numerous and violent conflicts. At Craiova the Romanian government had stated that the Bulgarians owned some 270,000 acres and 9,800 houses in Northern Dobruja. In the autumn of 1943, a highly official Romanian report placed the number of households relinquished by the repatriated Dobruja Bulgarians at 11,794, comprising 280,674 acres of arable land.⁶ The Sofia government, however, asserted that on verification the Bulgarian property in Northern Dobruja amounted to 321,234 acres worth 1,692 million lei, and 13,500 houses worth 644 million lei. Since the Bulgarian government had undertaken to compensate the repatriates for the property they left behind, this meant a much heavier financial burden than had been assumed at Craiova and that the arrangements it had made to pay 450,000 million leva to Romania, in install-

⁵ *Südost-Echo*, 7 February 1941.

⁶ *Trei Ani de Guvernare*, p. 149.

ments on 15 January 1941 and 15 January 1942, proved to be inadequate.

Further conflicts arose with regard to the settlement of private and administrative financial claims and obligations, as well as to the exchange rate of leva and lei.⁷ An official Bulgarian announcement also alleged that Romanian frontier guards had confiscated the movable possessions of the repatriates and their money, as well as official documents issued by the Romanian authorities concerning the real estate they had left behind and the requisitions made by Romania. As late as November 1943, negotiations were still under way between the Bulgarian and Romanian delegations concerning liquidation of property interests in Northern and Southern Dobruja.⁸ On 28 January 1944, *Argus* (Bucharest) reported that 100 million lei (1.01 million dollars at the prewar exchange rate) had been deposited with the Under-Secretary of State for Repatriation, Census and Colonization, to be paid as partial indemnity to the evacuated Bulgarian landowners at the rate of 5,000 lei (\$50) per hectare (2.471 acres).

The resettlement of the 61,000 repatriated Bulgarians can be considered as completed. On 4 May 1944, Transcontinent Press reported from Sofia that 14,500 settler families from Northern Dobruja had been allotted 314,558 acres of land in Southern Dobruja.

II

As stated above, the Treaty of Craiova provided that Romanians living in the districts of Durostor and Kali Akra in Southern Dobruja, which had been ceded to Bulgaria, were to be evacuated by 14 December 1940. Many Romanians in this area, however, did not wait for the conclusion of the treaty, but

⁷ 'Ein Nachspiel, zur Dobrudja Angelegenheit,' in *Südost-Economist*, 28 February 1941.

⁸ DNB dispatch, 15 November 1943.

left at the first word of the impending frontier revision.⁹ Thus, although the official evacuation did not start until 7 November, Dr. Leonhard Oberascher, editor of the *Südost-Echo*, reported that early in September he saw numerous Romanian refugee camps, with carts, horses, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, fodder stocks, and furniture loads, on the banks of the Danube between Turtucaia and Silistria. Many of these early immigrants were peasants who had been settled in Southern Dobruja after 1913 by the Romanian government, in order to Romanize the newly acquired province and to strengthen the new frontier against Bulgaria. Bernard Newman, who witnessed this settlement, stated that the Dobruja Bulgars 'glared at these Romanian settlers literally across the hearth. The tiny farms of the Bulgars were seized, and a half presented to an incoming Romanian. The Bulgar even had to house his enemy until he could build a dwelling for himself.'¹⁰ Intense hatred of these Romanian newcomers had grown up during the twenty-seven years of Romanian rule. Thus, many of the Romanians deemed it inadvisable to wait for the day when the Bulgars would again be rulers of the country.

Official Romanian statistics put the number of Romanians in the ceded districts of Durostor and Kali Akra at 282,844. This figure later proved to be greatly exaggerated. The number of Romanians who actually left Southern Dobruja in the course of the Bulgaro-Romanian population exchange did not exceed 100,000 (21,897 families).¹¹ On the other hand, the Romanian government, like the Bulgarian, was reluctant to accept all its countrymen from Southern Dobruja. According to the previously quoted report of the *Südost-Economist*, the Romanian government refused to receive 6,000 Romanians from the Tutracan

⁹ Leonhard Oberascher, 'Umsiedlung und Dissimilation,' in *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 3 January 1941.

¹⁰ Newman, op. cit. p. 276.

¹¹ *Trei Ani de Guvernare*, p. 149.

district. After long and futile negotiations, the Bulgarian authorities on 11 December removed this group forcibly from their homes, and sent them across the Danube to Romania. The Romanian authorities immediately sent them back to the Bulgarian bank of the river.¹²

Considering the Dobruja problem definitely solved, the Romanian government has made every effort to settle permanently the 100,000 repatriates from Southern Dobruja on Romanian territory as quickly as possible. A General Commissariat for Dobruja, entrusted with the resettlement of the evacuees from Southern Dobruja was established by the Romanian government.¹³ Northern Dobruja was selected as the main resettlement area, and the 280,674 acres of arable land and 11,794 farm properties vacated by the 61,000 repatriated Bulgarians were placed at the disposal of the General Commissariat. An additional 64,982 acres of land and 2,481 farms were made available by the emigration from this area of 14,500 Germans. The colonization plan provided, however, that each family of resettlers be given a house and a farm of at least 25 acres. Thus, out of the 21,897 evacuated families, not more than some 13,500 families or some 65,000 to 67,000 persons (65 per cent of the total number) could be resettled on an area of 345,656 acres of cultivated land in the Constantza and Tulcea districts of Northern Dobruja.

Since the number of Romanians repatriated from Southern Dobruja reached 100,000, the land reserves of Northern Dobruja proved insufficient for the settlement of all the Romanian repatriates. Therefore, 1,235 peasant families were installed in Bessarabia and 543 in Bukovina, in villages evacuated by the German colonists in the October-November 1940 transfer; 29 families were colonized in the district of Timis Torontal.¹⁴ A

¹² *Stidost-Economist*, 28 February 1941.

¹³ *Universul*, 28 August 1943.

¹⁴ *Trei Ani de Guvernare*, p. 150.

large group was destined for settlement around the Danube delta where fishing colonies were to be created; 25 million lei for the construction of houses and 18 million lei for fishing tackle were earmarked for them.¹⁵

The greatest problem in the Dobruja resettlement was that of housing, because most of the houses abandoned by repatriated Germans, and even more especially by Bulgarians, were found to be uninhabitable. In August 1943 the Romanian Commercial Service supervised the repair and construction of 3,900 houses.¹⁶

Although the General Commissariat for Northern Dobruja was dissolved in July 1943,¹⁷ there were still some 20,000 Dobruja repatriates not yet settled in permanent homes. These thousands of unsettled and dissatisfied persons constituted a troublesome problem for the country. In August 1943, the Ministry of Finance granted a credit of 20 million lei as indemnities for those repatriates who had abandoned their estates in Southern Dobruja and had not been indemnified in kind.¹⁸ In January 1944, the Office of Finance was authorized to grant a new credit of 100 million lei to the Office of Romanization and Resettlement for loans to farmers who had been resettled from Southern Bulgaria.¹⁹ *Universul* reported on 6 October 1943 that the Association of Evacuees from Southern Dobruja had appealed to the Minister of Romanization, requesting the same treatment as had been extended to the refugees from Transylvania, who had been given buildings and enterprises confiscated from the Jews.

In the light of the apparently permanent character of the partition of Dobruja, these 65,000 to 67,000 Romanians colonized in Northern Dobruja may be considered finally settled. The resettlement of the 25,000 Dobruja Romanians who were installed

¹⁵ *Donauzeitung*, 28 May 1942.

¹⁶ *Universul*, 28 August 1943.

¹⁷ *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 19 August 1943.

¹⁸ *Transcontinent Press*, 21 January 1944.

¹⁹ *Transcontinent Press*, 21 January 1944.

in reconquered Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina seems to be very much less stable. These resettlers face further displacement now that these provinces have been recovered by the Soviet Union.

III

After the population exchange of 1940, the Dobruja case was considered settled by both interested countries. On 7 September 1942, the joint Romanian-Bulgarian commission, which had been set up to supervise the implementation of the Treaty of Craiova and which had met periodically in Sofia, was dissolved.²⁰ Other nationality differences between the two states, however, remained unsettled. The numerous Romanian colonies scattered throughout Bulgaria, and particularly in the Timok Valley and south of the Danube near Vidin, still constituted a problem. According to the latest Bulgarian figures, the Romanian minority numbered 75,076; Romanian statistics claimed about 130,000.²¹ To this number must be added the Romanian minority in Greek and Serbian Macedonia, annexed by Bulgaria in 1941. There were constant complaints about the bad treatment of Bulgarians in Romania and vice versa.

In an effort to settle these quarrels, Romania and Bulgaria signed an agreement on 1 April 1943 extending the Craiova principle of exchange of populations to the entire territories of the two contracting parties. The exchange was not to be compulsory but on a voluntary basis. The right of repatriation was conferred on all Romanian citizens of Bulgarian descent residing in Romania, and on all Bulgarian citizens of Romanian descent living in Bulgaria. Persons wishing to avail themselves of this right were to report to the authorities before 31 May 1943.²²

²⁰ *Donauzeitung*, 9 December 1942.

²¹ Christopher Buckley, 'Rumania's Disputed Provinces,' in *Free Europe*, 12 July 1940, p. 91.

²² Transocean dispatch, 29 April 1943.

The Romanians repatriated from Bulgaria were to be settled in Transnistria and the Bulgarian repatriates from Romania were destined for resettlement in Thrace.²³

But almost simultaneously with the publication of this agreement, events took an unexpected turn. On 23 May, DNB reported from Bucharest in a dispatch for Europe: 'The Mixed Bulgarian-Romanian Commission for the Exchange of Nationals has announced that the governments of the two countries have abandoned the idea of voluntary resettlement of their respective nationals: applications will no longer be received.' The official explanation for the radical change in the repatriation policy of both countries was that 'neighborly relations between Romania and Bulgaria have become very cordial during the past few months and differences which might arise in connection with resettlement questions should therefore be avoided.'²⁴

This explanation hardly rings true. If 'neighborly relations' between Bulgaria and Romania had become 'cordial during the past few months,' they must have been cordial on 1 April when the repatriation agreement was concluded. No new and revolutionary developments in Bulgarian-Romanian relations occurred between 1 April and 23 May. The clue lies in the mention of 'differences which might arise in connection with resettlement questions' and which 'should therefore be avoided.' The dispatch indicates that such differences *had* arisen and that they were of so serious a nature that it was found necessary to drop the entire repatriation plan. It is possible that Hungarian pressure on Bulgaria may have been a prominent factor in the sudden abandonment of the exchange project. There are indications that early in May the Hungarian Minister in Bucharest had called the attention of the Bulgarian government to the fact that an agreement with Romania on an exchange of population would create difficulties for Hungary, which country was opposed to an ex-

²³ *Grenzbote*, 21 October 1942.

²⁴ Transocean dispatch, 25 May 1943.

change of population in Transylvania as a means of settling the territorial problems concerning this much-disputed province. The new Bulgaro-Romanian exchange agreement would render the continuance of this negative policy more difficult for the Hungarian government, and the latter made it clear that it would consider the carrying out of the agreement an unfriendly act.

After the abandonment of this large repatriation scheme, only minor exchanges of population occurred. Bulgaria concentrated her efforts on the repatriation of the 7,466 Bulgarians living in seven villages near the Caras River, in the southern part of the Romanian Banat.²⁵ The first group of 155 Bulgarians left for Eastern Bulgaria as early as September 1943. They were to be settled in the village of Berdarski Geren, on land which formerly belonged to German settlers who had returned to the Reich.²⁶ The second group of 96 Bulgarians from the Banat arrived on 19 October, and were directed to Northern Bulgaria for re-settlement.²⁷ A special committee was sent from Sofia to organize the repatriation.²⁸ On 9 October 1943, another group of repatriates, mainly artisans from Bucharest, also arrived in Bulgaria.²⁹ On the other hand, only small groups of Romanians were repatriated from Bulgaria. On 1 October 1943, DNB announced that 200 Romanians, most of them artisans and farmers, would return to their homeland from an unidentified part of Bulgaria.

²⁵ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 30 December 1943.

²⁶ Transocean broadcast, 1 October 1943.

²⁷ *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 10 October 1943; *Utro*, 20 October 1943.

²⁸ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 30 December 1943.

²⁹ *Zora*, 7 November 1943.

Bulgarian Population Policy in the Annexed Yugoslav and Greek Provinces

I

FOLLOWING a voluntary exchange of population between Bulgaria and Greece in 1920-30, only 81,296 Bulgarians remained in the latter country. The majority of them were concentrated in the northern part of western and central Macedonia, far from the Greco-Bulgarian border; there were no Bulgarians left in western Thrace. Even Axis sources admitted in 1941 that western Thrace and Macedonia 'remained virtually without Bulgarian inhabitants.'¹ But Bulgaria had never reconciled herself to the loss of the provinces allotted to Greece and Yugoslavia. The Bulgarian newspaper *Zora* emphatically stated that 'the Bulgarian state has never for a moment forgotten or ceased to express on all occasions its rights to the Aegean coast' and that the Bulgarian 'exiles regarded themselves only as guests among brothers.'²

The first opportunity for a *revanche*, which Bulgaria so eagerly awaited, presented itself in the spring of 1941, when Germany launched an attack on Yugoslavia on 6 April. Following the success of the German drive, Bulgarian troops occupied large sections of southern Serbia, including most of Yugoslav Macedonia. These areas were fully integrated into the Bulgarian administration and formed three newly created administrative

¹ *Donaueitung*, 25 November 1942.

² *Zora*, 24 January 1942.

entities comprising an area of 9,960 square miles—the Skoplje Oblast, the Bitolj Oblast, and the Morawski district.³

Another increase in territory followed quickly. On 21 April 1941, before the final capitulation of the Greek armies, Bulgarian troops were assigned by Germany to occupy the greater part of Thrace and Macedonia, and the Bulgarian Prime Minister cabled to Hitler his 'deepest thanks for the liberation of Macedonia and Thrace by the German army.'⁴ The area occupied and later incorporated by the Bulgarians extended from the Struma River on the west up to a line just east of Alexandroupolis (Dede Agach); it comprised most of the Greek department of Serrai, the departments of Drama, Kavalla, and Rhodope, and the western portion of the department of Evros—an area of 6,440 miles. This territory was named the 'Aegean provinces' by the Bulgarian government; its western part was given the name of Bielomorie (White Sea). The new masters described this district as 'rich and fruitful, whose climate allows a triple harvest in the year and whose natural blessings make it of value to the prosperity of Bulgaria and Europe.'⁵

The population policy of the Bulgarian government with regard to the annexed Yugoslav and Greek territories was far from uniform. According to the *Südost-Economist*, the ethnic composition of Bulgarian-annexed Yugoslav Macedonia had not changed greatly during the period of this area's incorporation in Yugoslavia; 80 per cent of the population were still considered by the Bulgarian government to be persons of Bulgarian ethnic origin.⁶ Therefore, only those Yugoslav citizens who had settled there after 1 December 1918 were to return to their native homes. Many Serbian 'colonists' were reported to have

³ *Südost-Economist*, 6 June 1941.

⁴ C. M. C., 'Bulgaria and the War,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 13 November 1943, p. 991.

⁵ Xydis, *The Economy and Finances of Greece under Axis Occupation in 1941-42*, p. 10.

⁶ *Südost-Economist*, 6 June 1941.

'fled' from their farms at the time of the Bulgarian occupation.⁷ A later Bulgarian decree gave former Yugoslav citizens in the annexed territory the choice of accepting Bulgarian citizenship or of leaving the country by November 1943. An official Yugoslav source asserts that notwithstanding the alleged Bulgarian character of this part of Macedonia, 120,000 Serbs were forcibly evicted under these decrees.⁸ This figure is obviously very much exaggerated. Among the 217,175 Yugoslav refugees from other parts of the country registered in Serbia proper, only 43,307 came from Macedonia.⁹ Some 12,000 Macedonian Jews were also deported and sent to German-occupied Poland.¹⁰ In July 1943, Yugoslav Macedonia was reported to be clear of Jews.¹¹

There is no information available to indicate any considerable influx of Bulgarian settlers into the annexed Yugoslav Macedonia. The 99,000 to 111,000 acres of 'ownerless land' distributed during 1941 and 1942 were given mostly to the local indigenous peasants; immigrants from Old Bulgaria profited by this distribution to only a small extent.¹²

The situation in eastern Macedonia and western Thrace was quite different. Here the first step taken by the Bulgarian authorities was the mass eviction and deportation of the Greek population of these provinces, effected by every method from subtle pressure to outright terrorism. On 10 June 1942, Bulgarian occupation officials announced that the inhabitants of Greek and Serbian origin living in these provinces were to opt for Bulgarian nationality before 1 April 1943; those unwilling to do so were to leave the country and liquidate all their property. The period of option was later extended to 1 November 1943.¹³

⁷ Zora, 13 February 1942.

⁸ Royal Yugoslav Information Center, *Atrocities and Transfer in Occupied Yugoslavia*; *Donauzeitung*, 21 March 1943.

⁹ *Politika*, 23 November 1944.

¹⁰ *Arbetaren*, 30 March 1943.

¹¹ *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 16 July 1943.

¹² *Vecher*, 20 April 1943.

¹³ *Donauzeitung*, 11 June 1942 and 21 March 1943.

A large number of Greeks refused to become Bulgarian citizens and obtained permission to leave the annexed provinces for German-occupied Salonika. They left all their property behind. There was also a steady trickle of unauthorized migration into the German-occupied Evros district which was under a Greek governor.

Another method of exerting pressure was discrimination in granting work permits, a system introduced by the Bulgarian authorities in December 1941. The granting of such permits depended on political considerations. Out of 6,800 shopkeepers, small merchants, small businessmen, and others who applied for such licenses, only 4,300 received them, and of 5,530 artisans, only 4,300 were successful in their petitions.¹⁴

These indirect pressures were accompanied by outright deportations. On 21 June 1942, *Pester Lloyd* reported that 71,000 Greeks had already left the Bulgarian-occupied Greek provinces. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 27 November spoke of 80,000 Greeks who had been expelled. And on 4 January 1943, an article in the London *Daily Herald* stated that 100,000 Greeks had been evicted from Greek Macedonia and western Thrace. Turkish reports in November of that year declared that 60,000 Greeks had been sent by Bulgarians to work in heavy industries in Austria.¹⁵ Prior to annexation, eastern Macedonia and western Thrace had a population of 688,480, according to the Greek statistical yearbook; in 1942, the Bulgarian statistical service placed the number of inhabitants of these annexed provinces at 590,000. Thus, the net loss admitted by the Bulgarians themselves even at that time amounted to 98,480.¹⁶ In February 1944, Turkish sources stated that of the total Greek population of 700,000

¹⁴ Xydis, op. cit. p. 19.

¹⁵ M. E. P., 'Greece and the War,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 14 February 1944, p. 136.

¹⁶ Xydis, op. cit. pp. 10-11.

in Bulgarian-occupied Greece, only 375,000 were reported to be left.¹⁷

The Greeks were first deported to inner Bulgaria. Later, however, Continental and Southern Greece, German-occupied central and western Macedonia and the province of Evros, as well as Austria, became the destination for deported and fleeing Greeks.

The deportation of the 4,269 Jews of the Aegean provinces and the 7,141 Jews of Macedonia was carried out simultaneously with that of the Greeks.¹⁸ The first train of Jewish deportees left Thrace for Poland in March 1943,¹⁹ and by the end of May, all the Jews from Thrace and Macedonia had already been deported to Poland.²⁰

Deportations were accompanied by wholesale seizure and confiscation of Greek and Jewish property. The latter was confiscated outright, but with regard to Greek property, such indirect methods of confiscation as compulsory liquidation and the refusal to allow the deportees to take cash with them were applied.²¹ The Greek Office of Research and Information stated that dispossessed Greeks were paid only 35 per cent of the value of their seized lands and homes.²² Greek-owned industrial and commercial establishments were also confiscated and the proprietors and workers exiled. In March 1942, dispatches from Ankara reported that 1,761 Greek enterprises, including textile and shipbuilding firms, had been seized. Most of these were located in the towns of Komotënë, Drama, and German-held Salonika.²³

¹⁷ *Bulletin of International News*, 4 March 1944, p. 201.

¹⁸ *Naroden Sud*, 14 January 1945.

¹⁹ *Donauzeitung*, 24 March 1943.

²⁰ *Social Demokraten*, 25 May 1943.

²¹ 'Greece Ground Down,' in *The Times*, London, 28 May 1942.

²² *News from Greece*, 17 April 1942.

²³ Special telegram to Greek daily, *National Herald*, reproduced in *News from Greece*, 3 March 1942.

II

In Bulgarian-annexed Yugoslav Macedonia, Bulgarization was mainly concerned with the administrative machinery. Bulgarian officials, who had served there before 1918, were reinstated, and many posts were given to local Macedonian Bulgarians. But in the annexed Greek territories the Bulgarian population policy took a different turn.

In January 1942 the German-controlled *Radio Paris* announced that Greece and Bulgaria were carrying out a population exchange.²⁴ What was actually taking place in the occupied Greek territories, however, was the eviction of the Greek element and its replacement by Bulgarian settlers. The special correspondent of the *Svenska Dagbladet*, who visited the Balkans in September 1944, described the Bulgarian policy in the annexed Greek areas as a 'frantic desire to Bulgarize western Thrace and eastern Macedonia as soon as possible by all means at their disposal . . . to establish a Bulgarian majority in these areas in order to reverse the conditions which prevailed there after the 1920 exchange of population—and to justify their claim to dominate these territories. . . . An extensive resettlement of new Bulgarian immigrants was organized.'²⁵ Only a part of these settlers were the same Bulgarians who had left between 1923 and 1932. In June 1943, the Bulgarian Premier, Bogdan Filov, announced that 'the greater part of the 150,000 Bulgarians in Thrace, who left their country at the end of the war of 1914-1918 have returned to their original home.'²⁶ But 150,000 is an arbitrary figure and it greatly exceeds the number of Bulgarians who left Thrace after 1919 as given by the Greco-Bulgarian mixed commission in charge of this emigration. Furthermore, there is no

²⁴ *News from Greece*, 31 January 1942.

²⁵ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10 October 1944.

²⁶ DNB broadcast, 26 June 1943.

doubt that under the label of 'repatriation' thousands of Bulgarians who had no ties with Thrace were transferred to this area.

As early as 23 November 1941, the Bulgarian newspaper *Zora* reported that the Ministry of Interior was issuing application forms to be filled out and returned by 15 December by all persons desiring to settle in the new provinces. It was announced originally that 'first, refugees of the Great War will return to their former homes, then farmers from the densely populated districts of Bulgaria will move.'²⁷ But this sequence was never observed. As a matter of fact, no difference was made between the two categories. *Donauzeitung* frankly declared on 29 May 1943 that 'whoever can prove that he has blameless national sentiments and can give a military guarantee; whoever has a large family and is at the same time a good farmer has the best prospects of being quickly admitted.' According to a decision of the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, only bachelors and married persons without families, as well as persons unfit for agricultural work, were not to be sent to the Aegean districts.²⁸ Applicants were obliged to leave Old Bulgaria within a fifteen-day period after the lists had been drawn up and the permits had been received.²⁹

Those who registered for resettlement were allowed to sell their property in Old Bulgaria or to cover it by mortgages, but only under the control of the Ministry of the Interior and with its permission. The state had the right to buy up the resettler's realty holdings at the private purchase price. This sum was then credited to the account of the new farm which he received in the resettlement area.

The resettlement started as an experiment early in 1942. By the end of February, 30,000 Bulgarians were said to have been

²⁷ *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 February 1942.

²⁸ *Zora*, 7 November 1942.

²⁹ *Donauzeitung*, 12 September 1942.

already established in the newly acquired territory.⁸⁰ Actual resettlement, however, was soon suspended and not resumed until the autumn of that same year. The interval was utilized for the surveying and classification of land, and for the rebuilding of houses destroyed during the war. According to the *Krakauer Zeitung* of 7 November 1942, the Bulgarian colonization authorities planned to erect the first 10,000 houses before the beginning of winter and to resettle the first 50,000 Bulgarian peasants by the end of 1942. According to Dr. Bontschev, Head of the Office for Questions of Population at the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior, 122,000 Bulgarians had been transferred to and settled in the Aegean provinces by the end of May 1943.⁸¹ In March 1944, the Bulgarian Minister of Public Works declared at Varna that 'now all Bulgarian refugees from that region have returned to their native soil . . . the national characteristic of that territory has reverted to what it was before it fell under the [Greek] yoke.'⁸²

The colonization of this area by peasants from Old Bulgaria, who had never before in any way been connected with it, continued during 1943, although at a considerably slower pace. Scattered information that appeared during the first months of 1943 indicates that only small groups of these Bulgarians were brought to the newly won areas, although the number of applications for resettlement reportedly reached 300,000.⁸³

The size of the acreage allotted to the settlers varied in accordance with the character of the soil. Wheat farms were allotted 9.3 to 12.3 acres; plots adapted to the cultivation of tobacco and other commercial products were granted only 5 to 7.4 acres. In addition, each family received a dwelling house similar to that to which it was accustomed in Bulgaria, as well as a garden

⁸⁰ *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 February 1942.

⁸¹ *Donauezeitung*, 29 May 1943.

⁸² Sofia radio, 5 March 1944.

⁸³ *Donauezeitung*, 29 May 1943.

of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of an acre. The settlers had to pay off only 65 per cent of the value of the land they received, in annual payments over a period of 15 years, beginning with 1944. For the first two years they were exempt from all taxes and other assessments. They were also granted additional credit by the Bulgarian land and co-operative bank. Single families were able to obtain credit up to 50,000 levas (\$610) at 4 per cent interest, repayable within 8 years. The settlers were forbidden to sell or to farm out the acquired farms, on pain of confiscation by the state.⁸⁴ As of May 1944, 150,731 acres of land had been distributed in former Greek and Yugoslav Macedonia, among 20,400 Bulgarian families.⁸⁵

According to Premier Filov, those Bulgarians who 'returned to their homeland . . . had settled again as peasants on their old holdings, some had been allotted new land or taken over the farms of Greeks who had left.' The Bulgarian cabinet decided that in places where the new settlers 'cannot obtain the livestock and goods which they require through voluntary sale on the part of the occupant living there, the authorities can, if necessary, enforce the sale.'⁸⁶

Not all the 122,000 Bulgarians sent to the Aegean provinces were peasants. Many settled in the towns, where they carried on their activities as officials, merchants, teachers, physicians, and craftsmen.⁸⁷

In September 1944, Bulgaria broke her ties with the Reich and surrendered to the Allies. In accordance with the precondition accepted by the Bulgarian government on 12 October 1944, Bulgarian armed forces and officials were withdrawn by the end of October from the occupied territory of Greece and Yugo-

⁸⁴ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 3 November 1942; *Donauzeitung*, 12 September 1942; *Survey of Central and Eastern Europe*, February 1943.

⁸⁵ Transcontinent Press, 4 May 1944.

⁸⁶ DNB broadcast, 26 June 1943; *Donauzeitung*, 12 September 1942.

⁸⁷ DNB broadcast, 26 June 1943.

slavia. An Allied commission was sent to supervise the implementation of the armistice signed on 28 October in Moscow between Bulgaria on the one hand and the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union on the other. Under its terms the Bulgarian authorities were immediately to take steps to remove from Greek and Yugoslav territory Bulgarians who were citizens of Bulgaria on 1 January 1941 (Article 2).³⁸ This provision of the armistice involves a new and extensive population shift: the return of the evicted Serbs and Greeks to their former residences and the enforced re-emigration of the transferred Bulgarians.

³⁸ Full text of the Bulgarian armistice appeared in the *New York Times*, 30 October 1944.

XXX

Unorganized Exchange of Population Between Romania and Hungary

I

THE Treaty of Trianon of 1920 allotted to Romania the entire province of Transylvania (22,312 square miles with 3,217,149 inhabitants), which since 1868 had been under Hungarian rule. It would carry us too far afield if we were to present all the controversial aspects of the Transylvanian ethnic and territorial problems as set forth by Romania and Hungary. For the immediate purposes of this study it is sufficient to state that all Hungarian parties and groups passionately supported the governmental campaign for the revision of the treaty and restoration of Transylvania. Romania, for her part, passionately defended her rights to Transylvania, which was the cradle of the Romanian national movement. Hundreds of books, thousands of pamphlets, and tens of thousands of articles have been published by partisans of both the Hungarian and the Romanian theses. The League of Nations was approached repeatedly by Hungarian organizations. Statistics on the ethnic composition of Transylvania were hotly disputed, and, all in all, the controversy appeared to be chronic and incapable of solution.

At the outbreak of World War II, all the small countries of Southeastern Europe were primarily anxious to avoid any complication that would lead to the spread of hostilities in the Balkans. Hungary, while never abandoning her claims to Transylvania, made it clear that she would postpone the issue until the end of the war. But the Soviet Union's seizure of Bessarabia

and Northern Bukovina shattered the already unstable Romanian *status quo* and precipitated action on the part of Hungary, who decided to make the most of the situation and to get her share. She presented her claim to Transylvania and began to mass troops along the frontier.

Romania met the situation by seeking German protection, but was advised to negotiate with Hungary. Conferences between the two countries began at Turnu-Severin in August 1940. The Romanian representatives fully realized that concessions were unavoidable, and offered to make considerable territorial adjustments.¹ They suggested, however, that the new delimitation be based on a preliminary but extensive population exchange between the two countries. The territorial sacrifices which Romania was prepared to make were to be based on the results of this exchange and were to provide the necessary living space for the repatriates. The Romanian delegation argued that 'by an equitable rectification of the then existing frontier and an exchange of populations, a settlement could be reached that would in effect reduce to a minimum the number both of Hungarians in Romania and of Romanians in Hungary.'² Romanian Foreign Minister Manolescu proposed this scheme in a speech delivered in August 1940; Prime Minister M. J. Gîgurtu reiterated it several days later.³

The Hungarian delegates, however, flatly refused to consider the proposal. They argued that the number of Magyars to be exchanged and resettled exceeded by far the number of Romanians to be repatriated, and demanded the cession of the greater part of Transylvania—thirteen departments covering more than 26,000 square miles.⁴ They were willing to consider

¹ Newman, *The New Europe*, p. 266.

² Clark, *Racial Aspects of Romania's Case*, p. 19.

³ Arnold Weingärtner, 'Ende und Anfang in Rumanien,' in *Nation und Staat*, October 1940, p. 7.

⁴ *Affaires Danubiennes*, 1940, no. 8, p. 75.

a population exchange only as a concomitant to this cession of land.

The dispute was referred to Axis arbitration. On 30 August 1940, in Vienna, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Italian Foreign Minister Count Ciano awarded the northern half of Transylvania (17,500 square miles) to Hungary. According to data supplied by the Romanian Demographic Institute, 1,804,894 of the 3,109,585 inhabitants of this area were Romanians, and 968,074 were Magyars.⁵ These figures should not, of course, be accepted as undeniably accurate. The Romanians complained that as a result of the cession of Northern Transylvania 978,000 Magyars had been returned to Hungary at the cost of 1,304,000 Romanians.⁶

In connection with the transfer of territorial sovereignty, provision was made for a voluntary population exchange. Romanians in Northern Transylvania were allowed to opt within six months for either Hungarian or Romanian citizenship. Those opting for Romania were to leave Hungarian territory within the following year. The same conditions applied in reverse to those persons in Southern Transylvania choosing Hungarian citizenship. In contrast to the Craiova agreement between Romania and Bulgaria concerning Dobruja, this exchange of population between Romania and Hungary was not compulsory in any sense. The Romanians in Northern Transylvania as well as the Magyars in Southern Transylvania were at liberty to remain, provided that they accepted Hungarian and Romanian citizenship respectively. If they were willing to accept, they simply refrained from opting and after six months automatically became Hungarian or Romanian citizens, as the case might be. The right of option expired at that time. The entire question was one of individual choice and neither government as such was involved in any way. Nor was either government under any obligation to organize

⁵ Newman, *op. cit.* p. 266.

⁶ *Universul*, 14 January 1944.

the evacuation or to assist the repatriates on their arrival in the country of their choice.

The Vienna award (Article 3) stipulated that the prospective emigrants were allowed to take with them their movable property duty-free; immovable property could be sold before their departure and the proceeds could be exported without hindrance. If the emigrant did not succeed in selling his property prior to his departure, he was to be adequately compensated by the government of the country he was leaving.

This Hungarian-Romanian agreement was greeted in Berlin with great satisfaction. Leading German circles asserted that both countries had really 'agreed to transfer certain groups of the population, so as to create purer and more homogeneous national states.' They described this method as 'the proper manner of solving a number of difficult Balkan problems' and noted that it had been 'adopted by the Reich on several occasions.'⁷

II

As a matter of fact, neither the Hungarian nor the Romanian government was anxious to receive the repatriates, both countries considering the Vienna award a purely temporary affair. Thus the first weeks immediately following the award witnessed rather paradoxical developments. Concurrent with the precipitate exodus of numerous Romanian families, particularly those of officials and politicians, from Northern Transylvania southward, there was another population shift in the opposite direction—a mass exodus of Magyars leaving Romanian territory for Northern Transylvania.⁸ Skilled Magyar workers, artisans, factory foremen, heavy workers, and house servants, who had found employment in such highly developed industrial centers as Cluj, Medias, Scharburg, and Sibiu, arose in a spon-

⁷ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 October 1941.

⁸ *Nation und Staat*, December 1940, pp. 95-6.

taneous emigration movement. The Budapest correspondent of the International Labour Office was told by the Hungarian Foreign Office in January 1944 that about 160,000 Hungarians had been forced to abandon their residences in Romania and to seek refuge in Hungary.

This exodus was in no way opposed by the Romanian government; on the contrary, it was rather welcomed. But the Hungarian government termed this 'wild runaway' unreasonable and undesirable from the political point of view. The Hungarian claim for the return of the rest of Transylvania and the other provinces lost in 1919 was still pending, and the hundreds of thousands of Magyars on the Romanian side of the frontier were considered a potentially great asset for the fulfillment of these claims. The Hungarian government, therefore, sent back the 'unauthorized immigrants.' Their readmission was flatly refused by the Romanian authorities. Romania argued that these people had left Romanian territory voluntarily and with the permission of the Romanian government. They had been allowed to carry with them all their movable property and to sell their real estate. Thus they had broken all ties with Romania and could not justifiably claim the right to return.

The Hungarian government retaliated with repressions against Romanians in Northern Transylvania. Thousands of Romanian intelligentsia, and later, even peasants were deported on one to three hours' notice. Usually they were not allowed to take with them even the most necessary personal belongings. Transports of Romanian deportees were put into cattle cars, which were then sealed and sent via Békéscsaba and Curtici over the Romanian border.⁹

The same basic policy governed the actions of the Romanian government with regard to its countrymen in the Hungarian part of Transylvania. Romania had by no means relinquished the hope of recovering the territory ceded under pressure of an

⁹ Ibid. December 1940, p. 95.

unfavorable political situation. In the achievement of this goal, her principal asset would be the large Romanian population in Northern Transylvania. Even according to Hungarian statistics, Romanians constituted 43 per cent of the inhabitants of this province. The Romanian government could hardly be expected to diminish the potential weight of this group by encouraging a mass emigration.

As a matter of fact, in 1940, only 88,587 of the 1.37 million Romanians in this area exercised their right of option and left Northern Transylvania. The emigration movement, however, continued during succeeding years. In 1941 the number of Romanian emigrants was 35,432; in 1942, it reached 74,414; and in 1943, it amounted to 21,494.¹⁰ But according to data published in January 1944 by the Romanian General Commissariat for the Refugees from Transylvania, there were 218,927 Transylvanian refugees.¹¹ Therefore, some 17 per cent of the Romanian population of Northern Transylvania, originating mainly in the districts of Cluj, Bichor, Satu-Mare, and Salaj, had left for Romania.¹²

The following figures indicate the sex, age, and to some degree the occupational structure of this mass of repatriates: ¹³

Male.....	127,122	Under 16 years.....	48,314
Female.....	91,805	Between 16 and 20.....	32,686
		Between 21 and 40.....	93,846
		Between 41 and 55.....	29,257
		Over 55 years.....	14,824
Housewives.....	48,612	Liberal professions.....	1,027
Minors and other dependents	29,921	Students and pupils.....	24,083
Farmers.....	30,740	Priests.....	1,254
Laborers.....	21,971	Teachers.....	5,429
Artisans.....	12,646	Lawyers.....	949
Traders-Industrialists.....	2,317	Physicians.....	741
Civil Servants.....	20,074	Engineers.....	547
White-collar workers.....	4,526	Domestic servants.....	4,652

¹⁰ *Universul*, 9 October 1943 and 9 January 1944.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 9 January 1944.

¹² *Curentul*, 5 February 1944.

¹³ *Universul*, 9 January 1944.

In this group of refugees, 93,840 or 42.57 per cent were men between the ages of twenty and forty, who by migrating sought to avoid conscription into the Hungarian army. Although farmers, laborers, and artisans constituted the largest group among the repatriated Romanians, former officials and persons engaged in the liberal professions were also largely represented. The latter elements had lost their jobs under the new Hungarian regime and saw no prospects for a better future. As representatives of the policy of Romanization, they were cordially hated by the local Hungarian population and had good reason to fear vengeance.

There was no room in the densely populated Romanian part of Transylvania¹⁴ for the resettlement of the more than 200,000 Romanian repatriates. The Magyars living in this area had not emigrated in corresponding numbers, so that there were not enough vacated farms or jobs to accommodate the newcomers from the Hungarian-annexed areas.

While the main body of these refugees evidently gravitated to Bucharest, the state maintained 25 hostels and canteens for them in 11 other towns as well. During 1943, refugees receiving aid of some sort totaled 28,520 or about 8,000 more than in 1942. Presumably the bulk of the refugees aided were recent arrivals. Allotments in cash alone amounted to 15 million lei (theoretically equivalent to \$75,000), and 6,368 free meals were served.¹⁵

After the reconquest of Bessarabia in 1941, a *New York Times* dispatch from Bucharest reported that 100,000 Transylvanian Romanians were to be settled in this area.¹⁶ This project never materialized, and a great portion of the Transylvanian refugees continued to live on state support. A special governmental commission was set up to organize assistance for them.¹⁷ They were

¹⁴ In January 1942 the population numbered 1,736,307.

¹⁵ *Universul*, 9 January 1944.

¹⁶ *New York Times*, 22 August 1941

¹⁷ Havas, 21 November 1942.

also given buildings and business enterprises confiscated from the Jews.¹⁸

As has been indicated, the Romanian government preferred to maintain the repatriates in their refugee status as a potential trump in the political game for the recovery of Northern Transylvania, and, at the same time, as the vanguard for the eventual recolonization of this area. The majority of the repatriates themselves retained the hope of returning to Northern Transylvania where they had been the ruling class, and they preferred a temporary, unsettled refugee status to the more permanent but very modest existence open to them in Romania proper.

The German-controlled *Curentul* of 5 February 1944 expressed the hopes prevailing among the Transylvania refugees:

These 218,927 Romanians form an entire Romanian army on guard near the temporary frontiers of Romania. They have lived for three years the terrible nightmare of draining the cup of sorrow, every day working and waiting and hoping. They do not want official declarations or diplomatic conferences—they wait for the day when they will be able to come home. Those 218,927 Romanians form an army of vengeance at the gate of Romania's history. They know that they won't wait in vain and they do not mind that the road to the realization of their dreams leads along a deep abyss. . .

III

In August 1944 Romania withdrew from the Axis camp. The press reported that immediately thereafter hundreds of volunteers, most of them refugees from Northern Transylvania, presented themselves at the offices of the publication *Ardealul* asking that a voluntary corps be formed to fight for the reunion of this part of Transylvania with Romania.¹⁹ Soviet and Romanian armies swiftly reconquered the Hungarian-annexed por-

¹⁸ *Universul*, 6 October 1942.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 30 August 1944.

tion of Transylvania, and the Soviet-Romanian armistice, signed on 12 September, declared the Vienna award 'non-existent.' In March 1945 Northern Transylvania was solemnly restored to Romanian sovereignty.

The advance of Soviet and Romanian troops into Transylvania was preceded by a mass flight of Hungarians from the threatened areas. *Uj Magyarország* reported on 26 September 1944 that 'thousands are fleeing from Transylvania in order to escape from the enemy,' and that about 3,000 Transylvanian refugees had already arrived in Budapest. American personnel of the Allied Control Commission, who visited Transylvania in December 1944, spoke of an exodus of tens of thousands of Hungarians with the retreating German and Hungarian armies. On the other hand, the Romanian authorities who returned to the liberated area were reported to have arrested and deported during the first weeks of reoccupation 3,000 Hungarian men in Cluj and the whole male population of several Hungarian villages near Satu-Mare.

These first excesses of revenge appear to have been discontinued. In a telegram sent on 8 March 1945 to Marshal Stalin, expressing gratitude for the restoration of Northern Transylvania to the Romanian administration, the Romanian Premier, Petre Groza, declared: 'The Romanian government understands that the administration which it will introduce into this province must take care of the defense of the nationalities living there, and must follow in its actions the principles of humanity towards the whole population.' In his reply to this telegram, Marshal Stalin also stressed the necessity of 'guaranteeing the rights of nationalities' in Transylvania.²⁰ According to the Romanian press of 16 May the Groza government declared itself ready to take back the Hungarians who fled from Transylvania.

²⁰ Bucharest radio, 10 March 1945.

XXXI

Hungarian Repatriation Policy

I

APPARENTLY in imitation of the German repatriation scheme, the Hungarian government in the late summer and fall of 1942 announced its intention to repatriate Magyar minorities living in neighboring countries.¹ Accordingly, it appointed a special Government Commissioner for the Repatriation of Hungarians Abroad. Earlier that year *Soproni Hirlap* had even published an article suggesting that, on the lines of the German resettlement plan, all Finno-Ugrian tribes in Europe and Asia should be transferred to Central Europe.²

In actual practice, however, these grandiose pronouncements resulted in nothing more than the occasional repatriation of small Hungarian folk groups from Romania and Croatia. The hundreds of thousands of Magyars remaining in rump Romania and Slovakia were not affected, and at the end of 1943 not more than some 20,000 Magyars had been resettled.

The resettlement of this group was rendered possible by the annexation in the spring of 1941 of the Yugoslav provinces of Bachka and part of Baranya. The Hungarian government expelled all the Serbs who had settled there during the previous twenty years of Yugoslav sovereignty and cancelled the former Belgrade government's land redistribution measures.³ This latter move made 75,260 acres of land available for the resettlement of

¹ *Krakauer Zeitung*, 20 August 1942; *Basler Nachrichten*, 20 November 1942.

² *Soproni Hirlap*, 13 March 1942.

³ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 June 1941; *New York Times*, 19 June 1941.

Hungarians from abroad. By November 1942, 54,036 acres had been distributed among 4,294 families comprising 17,614 persons, who were established in 32 complete settlements. About 143 families repatriated from Bukovina, Moldavia, Bosnia, and the Soviet Union were given new homes in Madiknepe and Hortyvara. By this operation the Magyar element in the Bachka was increased by 6 per cent. There still remained some 20,000 acres of land at the disposal of the Government Commissioner for Repatriation, enabling him to bring in 1,300 to 1,400 additional families.⁴ According to *Deutsche Arbeit* of September 1942, difficulties arose because the local Magyars and Germans asserted their right to the land made available through the expulsion of the dispossessed Serbian peasants and landowners, and protested its allotment to 'foreign' Hungarians from abroad.

The most sizable of the transferred groups were the Szeklers of Bukovina. Their ancestors had fled there from Transylvania in 1764 to escape slaughter by the Austrian troops at the time of the Massacre of Madefalva. They had created seven closed agricultural communities and remained an ethnological unit, preserving their language, religion, and traditions. Until 1919 they lived under Austrian sovereignty; they were then turned over to Romania.

In 1940, when Northern Bukovina was ceded to the Soviet Union, the situation of the Szeklers became precarious. Following the pattern of the German evacuation from Bukovina, the Budapest government began negotiations with the government of Romania for the repatriation of the Bukovina Hungarians. Following the annexation of the Yugoslav province of Bachka, the operation was accelerated; it lasted 38 days and was completed in mid-June, just a few days before the outbreak of the German-Romanian war against the Soviet Union. Altogether, some 3,906 families numbering 15,593 persons were repatriated.

⁴ *Magyarság*, 8 November 1942; *Népszava*, 13 October 1943.

‘The resettlers, on leaving their homes, were permitted by the Romanian government to take with them their furniture and their church plate, as well as to sell their animals and to dispose of their money. An arrangement between Romania and Hungary provided for the disposal of their land and houses. Within three and one-half months they were given 49,700 acres of land in the Bachka, with field and houses, and the necessary stocks of cattle, furniture, and agricultural implements. The purchase price for all this, which had been reduced by 25 per cent, was to be paid off within 47 years. Hungarian sources assert that the resettlers very soon became self-supporting.’⁵

Hungary and Romania also concluded an agreement regarding the repatriation of the 829 Magyars living in Bessarabia.⁶ As early as October 1941, the first transport of these persons was reported to have arrived in Hungary.⁷ There is no later information in regard to the completion of this project.

Another group of Magyar repatriates from Romania were the 408 families (1,631 persons) who came during the period from March to September 1942 from Moldavia. They were also resettled in the Bachka.⁸

II

In 1942, the Hungarian government undertook the repatriation of Hungarians living in four scattered settlements of Bosnia—the villages of Gunja, Vucsijak, Brchko, and Bijeljina—a total of 355 families numbering 1,400 persons.⁹ They were resettled in the Bachka and given 326 houses, 23 farms, and 4,085 acres of

⁵ *Danubian Review*, July 1941, p. 26; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 June 1941; *New York Times*, 19 June 1941.

⁶ According to the Romanian census of 1930.

⁷ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 October 1941.

⁸ *Pester Lloyd*, 6 January 1943. According to Paul Peter Domokos, there were 100,000 persons of Hungarian origin in Moldavia, for 65,000 of whom Hungarian was the mother tongue. (*A Moldvai Magyarok*, pp. 181-2.)

⁹ Quoted in *Neues Bauerntum*, December 1942, p. 458, from *Donaueuropa*, September 1942.

land, together with the requisite grain, cattle and agricultural implements.¹⁰ This removal of Bosnian Hungarians was a well-planned and well-organized undertaking, carried out under relatively normal and peaceful circumstances.

Far more dramatic was the partial evacuation, in 1943, of Hungarians living in Croatia proper, precipitated by the increased activities of the Yugoslav Partisans. According to the Novisad *Reggeli Ujság* of 1 May 1943, the situation of the Hungarians living in the Syrmian forests had become desperate. While the German and Croat populations were protected by the Croat authorities and the armed organization of the German folk group, the Hungarians had neither arms nor any other means of defense. In addition, the paper continued, 'the young Hungarians able to bear arms have been conscripted into the Croat militia (*Domobran*) and are bleeding elsewhere in Bosnia while their families at home are left entirely at the mercy of the Partisans.' Reporting attacks against the communities of Maradik and Gladnos Puszta, *Reggeli Ujság* stated that the entire Croat and German population of the latter town had been evacuated but that the Serbs and Hungarians had been left behind. The same newspaper had reported earlier¹¹ that the Hungarians living in the Kutina district near Sisak had been driven by Partisans into the neighboring forests while their houses were set afire. A search organized later by the Hungarian Association resulted in the rescue of 102 persons, who represented only a fraction of the number driven into the forests.

These accounts tally with a Lahti (Finland) radio broadcast on 6 May 1943 of a Zagreb report stating that because of the continued activities of the guerrillas many Hungarian families resident in Croatia had decided to move to Hungary, and that so far 1,500 persons, mainly peasants, had emigrated. It is difficult to

¹⁰ *Pester Lloyd*, 6 January 1943.

¹¹ *Reggeli Ujság*, 18 April 1943.

establish what proportion of the Hungarians in Croatia this group represented. In announcing the projected repatriation of Hungarians from neighboring countries, the Hungarian Premier had mentioned 100,000 to 120,000 in Croatia. The *Brüsseler Zeitung* of 30 July 1942 placed the number of Hungarians in the new Croat state at 70,000, while on 28 January 1943, the *St. Galler Tageblatt* estimated the number at 41,000.

In May 1941 it was reported from Budapest that the Hungarian government had decided to repatriate all Hungarian residents in Belgrade and that Hungarian diplomatic officials in that city had been instructed to take the necessary steps.¹² During the following summer, 2,000 Belgrade Hungarians returned to Hungary in several groups. The repatriation was resumed in October 1943 and completed in 1944. In August of that year, *Esti Ujság* stated that 'hardly one Magyar is left in Belgrade,' whereas the Magyar colony had numbered 30,000 in the spring of 1941.¹³

A special Hungarian committee in Belgrade was entrusted with organizing the return of the Hungarians. Before the evacuees' departure, this committee took over their funds, which were to be redeemed in pengö after arrival on Hungarian territory. *Reggeli Ujság* reported, however, that this promise was not fulfilled and that the repatriates remained penniless.¹⁴

All the repatriated Magyar folk groups were resettled in the Hungarian-annexed Yugoslav province of Bachka, with the exception of those from Belgrade who were distributed throughout Hungary proper. By October 1944, the relentless advance of the Soviet troops began to threaten this province. The Budapest government was fully aware of the fact that the first to suffer from the anger of the local Serbs would be the Hungarian settlers transferred from abroad and installed on the farms of

¹² *New York Times*, 13 May 1941.

¹³ Quoted in *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 13 August 1944.

¹⁴ *Reggeli Ujság*, 29 September 1943; DNB broadcast (for Europe), 12 October 1943.

the deported and expelled Serbian peasants. On 11 and 12 October 1944, therefore, the official Hungarian radio broadcast a message to the Szeklers and other settlers in the Bachka ordering them to Transdanubia, to the country districts of Pacsa, Zalaszentgrot, and Sümeg, where preparations had been made for their accommodation.¹⁵ The Magyarization of the Bachka through repatriation of Hungarian folk groups proved to be a very short-lived affair.

According to *Szabad Nep* of 5 May 1945, some of the Szeklers were resettled in seven German villages of Tolna county from which German peasants had been removed. They were given the land, equipment, and livestock of the previous German owners; the latter were permitted to take with them only a change of clothing and enough food to last a few days. The Groza government of Romania has since announced that country's readiness to resettle the Szeklers in their old homes.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hungarian Home Service, 11 and 12 October 1944.

¹⁶ *Timpul*, 16 May 1945.

XXXII

Croat Repatriation Policy

I

ALMOST immediately after the creation of the Independent State of Croatia, the Pavelitch government announced its decision to undertake a large-scale repatriation of Croats living in Serbia proper and Macedonia. As early as the end of July 1941, the number of Croats repatriated was estimated at 50,000. At the beginning of November of the same year, the Croat Office for Repatriation reported that 70,000 Croats had 'come home' from Serbia and the Yugoslav part of the Banat.¹

The government also announced its intention of repatriating Croats living in Bulgaria. There are no figures whatever with regard to the size of this Croat minority. Data published by the Zagreb Statistical Office on Croats Abroad make no reference at all to Croats in Bulgaria.² Nevertheless, in April 1942 the Croat Legation in Sofia invited all Croats living in Bulgaria and wishing to return to Croatia to register with the legation.³ There is no information on the results of this projected repatriation.

Partly with the intention of clearing Croatia of the 'unreliable' Serbian element and partly also in order to make room for the repatriated Croats from Serbia proper, Macedonia, and the Banat, the Ustashi Chief of State, Dr. Ante Pavelitch, announced in August 1941 the government's decision to deport to a purely Serbian area 250,000 of the total of 1.5 million Serbs living in Croatia.⁴ There is no precise information concerning the num-

¹ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 July and 3 November 1941.

² *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 22 January 1943.

³ *Der Angriff*, 28 April 1942.

⁴ *World-Telegram*, New York, 13 August 1941.

ber of Serbs actually evacuated. The well-informed *Nation und Staat* of June 1942 speaks of an unascertained number of Serbs from Croatia who 'emigrated' to Serbia proper, adding that most of them were Serbs who had settled in Croatia after the creation of the Yugoslav state in 1918. Their property was turned over to the state for colonization by the native population. Yugoslav sources estimate that 250,000 Serbs and pro-Yugoslav Croats were forced to leave Croatia for Serbia and Italian-held areas,⁵ but this figure appears to be grossly exaggerated. Among the 217,175 refugees from other parts of Yugoslavia who were registered in Serbia proper, only 119,774 came from Croatia, Bosnia, and Hercegovina together.⁶

The large-scale resettlement of Croats on vast areas of arable land in northern Croatia, which was undertaken by the Croat Colonization Institute in Zagreb, functioning under the Ustashi Department of Agriculture, was apparently connected with this mass eviction of Serbs. During the first year of its existence, the Institute organized the settlement of some 50,000 Croats. It is not known where these settlers came from, nor on whose land they were settled. However, since the *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien* of 3 October 1942 stated that the Croats settled in the 200 new colonies received from the state not only cheap land but also farming implements, dwellings, and farm buildings, other necessities and even livestock, it seems highly probable that these farms had been confiscated from the deported Serbian peasants.

II

On 11 August 1943, Croatia and the Reich concluded—apparently as a kind of counterpart to the transfer of some 20,000 Germans from Bosnia in the fall of 1942—an agreement providing

⁵ Royal Yugoslav Information Center reply to International Labour Office questionnaire, dated 5 December 1942.

⁶ *Politika*, 23 November 1944.

for the transfer to Croatia of Croat subjects and persons of Croat ethnic nationality (*Volkszugehörige*) residing or domiciled in Lower Styria.⁷ This agreement was wholly in accord with the Reich's determination to make of this province a purely German country. Tens of thousands of the Slovenes of Lower Styria were simply deported or expelled. But Germany's close relations with the Pavelitch government made such a procedure impracticable with regard to the Croats. The Reich, therefore, settled their fate through an agreement with the government, which, for its part, was eager to continue its policy of repatriating Croats scattered throughout the former Yugoslav territory.

The agreement provided for voluntary repatriation of the Croats in Lower Styria, but earlier experiences suggest that the Croat subjects had no free choice in the matter. Under the terms of a similar German-Italian agreement of 21 October 1939, concerning the transfer of Germans from the Italian South Tyrol, Reich citizens residing in this province had no right of option and were obliged to leave automatically. The same conditions undoubtedly applied in the case of the Lower Styria Croats. On the other hand, Croat *Volkszugehörige*, who had acquired German citizenship as a result of the incorporation of the province by the Reich, were permitted to choose. They were referred to as *Umsiedler* (resettlers) and were requested to submit a written decision within three months after the publication of the agreement. A special German-Croat Transfer Commission was established to decide upon the validity of the transfer declarations. Six thousand persons comprising about 1,500 families had registered for repatriation by November 1943.⁸ Those who opted for transfer were given from eight to fifteen months to effect their repatriation.

The transfer of property was regulated by agreements concluded by the Reich and Croatia on 16 April and 11 August

⁷ *Marburger Zeitung*, 4 April 1943.

⁸ *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 7 November 1943.

1943, prior to the actual repatriation accord. The first dealt with the estates of Croat citizens, which were to pass into the hands of the German Reich. Those losing their real property in Lower Styria were guaranteed compensation in kind within the territory of Croatia, on the basis of assessment by a Croat-German mixed commission. They were entitled to remove, free of customs duty and export restrictions, all their movable property, with the exception of farming equipment necessary to the maintenance and productivity of the evacuated estates.⁹

The matter of the property of the *Umsiedler* was settled in similar fashion by the 11 August agreement. They, too, were permitted to take with them all their movable belongings. However, seed and fodder strictly necessary to the German economy, machines, implements, cattle, and horses were excluded. In practical terms, this meant that the departing Croat peasants were to move to Croatia without the tools necessary for the performance of agricultural work. With regard to their real estate holdings, the agreement provided that this land be taken over for the Reich government by the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism, as partial compensation for the property left behind in Croatia by German *Umsiedler* from Bosnia. The Croat Colonization Institute assured the prospective transferees that they would obtain the property of Germans who were returning to the fatherland.¹⁰

⁹ *Nova Hrvatska*, 7 July 1943; *Hrvatski Narod*, 30 September 1943.

¹⁰ *Hrvatski Narod*, 6 October 1943.

XXXIII

Minor Population Transfers

1

ACCORDING to the *Kolnische Zeitung* of 30 December 1943, there were about 200,000 Bulgarians in the Axis-occupied Crimea and the Odessa district, and 60,000 living in the region of the Sea of Azov. These figures are unquestionably exaggerated. Official Soviet sources speak of only 111,000 Bulgarians scattered throughout the Soviet Union,¹ and these were mainly descendants of immigrants who had come to Russia between 1769 and 1862 and had settled in the governments of Kherson, Chernigov, and Tauria.²

On 20 August 1943, *Curentul* reported that a Bulgarian delegation from the Romanian-held southern Ukraine had arrived in Bucharest for the purpose of arranging for the repatriation of Bulgarians. The first group of Bulgarian repatriates from the Ukraine, numbering 152 persons (61 families), arrived at the Romanian-Bulgarian frontier station of Russe in November 1943.³ The second group, which included doctors, lawyers, and traders, arrived in December. The first contingent covered most of the journey in horse-drawn vehicles; later, special trains were assigned for the evacuation.⁴

The reoccupation of the Ukraine by the Soviet armies precipitated a new sequence of events. At the end of January 1944,

¹ *Malaya Sovetskaya Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1, p. 780.

² Gheneff, *Die bulgarischen Minderheiten unter fremder Herrschaft*, p. 101.

³ *Zora*, 7 November 1943.

⁴ *Magyar Távirati Iroda (MTI)* (Hungarian Telegraph Bureau), 15 December 1943; *Transcontinent Press*, 17 December 1943.

the Transcontinent Press reported from Sofia that the total Bulgarian population of some 60,000, domiciled in the region of the Sea of Azov, had withdrawn with the German troops.⁵ According to other reports, the number of those who actually returned to Greater Bulgaria bears no relation to this figure. Axis sources reveal that up to April 1944 only smaller groups, amounting to some 2,000 persons, arrived in Bulgaria from the Sea of Azov, the Tauria, and Crimean Peninsula regions.⁶ *Izvestia* claimed on 12 August that 600 'Russian families of Bulgarian extraction were forcibly deported' from the Odessa region to Bulgaria and then 'influenced to relinquish Soviet citizenship.' The Bulgarian government planned to settle this new wave of repatriates in Dobruja and in the incorporated former Greek and Yugoslav provinces.⁷ In November, the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria announced that all citizens of the Soviet Union, on Bulgarian soil 'for some reason,' must immediately register for repatriation to their homeland.⁸

II

By the terms of a German-Romanian pact signed at Tighina on 19 August 1941,⁹ a large sector of the Axis-occupied southern Ukraine, between the Dniester and the Bug rivers, was proclaimed the Romanian province of Transnistria—the land beyond the Dniester.¹⁰ This province covered an area of 16,000 square miles and contained a population of 2,236,226 inhabitants.¹¹

The Romanian press consistently stressed the predominantly

⁵ Transcontinent Press, 31 January 1944.

⁶ DNB broadcast, 3 March 1944; MTI, 8 March 1944; Transcontinent Press, 21 March and 4 April 1944.

⁷ *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, 4 March 1944.

⁸ Bulgarian Home Service, 19 November 1944.

⁹ *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 October 1943.

¹⁰ *Stockholms-Tidende*, 16 May 1942.

¹¹ *Bukarester Tageblatt*, 20 August 1943.

Romanian character of Transnistria. *Porunka Vremii* asserted that 'there are more than 1 million Romanians beyond the Dniester.'¹² Actually, Romanians constituted only a small minority in Transnistria's total population, which was primarily Ukrainian.¹³ Well aware of this situation, and in the hope of strengthening Romanian claims on Transnistria, General Antonescu announced that Transnistria would be made into a model Romanian settlement through the large-scale transfer of Romanians from other parts of the occupied Soviet territory. A special committee was appointed by the government to handle the repatriation of persons of Romanian stock living beyond the Bug, as well as in other parts of the Ukraine on the Dnieper River, in the Crimea, and in the Caucasus. The number of prospective repatriates was estimated as somewhere between 30,000 and 200,000.¹⁴ There were also plans to transfer to inner Romania a part of the 1.07 million Ukrainians and 710,000 Russians in Transnistria and to replace them by Romanians from Romania proper,¹⁵ but this latter project was never realized.

As it worked out, only small groups of colonists of Romanian origin were transferred to Transnistria from Romanian villages scattered over other parts of Axis-occupied Soviet territory. *Universul* of 23 June 1943 mentioned Romanian peasants brought from Moldavanskaya in the Kuban region. As a matter of fact, the limited influx of Romanians into Transnistria consisted almost exclusively of officials and of military elements. *Izvestia* of 14 October 1941 spoke of a 'pack of Romanian officials, gendarmes, and landlords raging in the Romanian-occupied area,' and made special mention of 4,600 requisition officers sent over from Old Romania.

In October 1943, the advance of the Soviet troops on the

¹² *Porunka Vremii*, 26 September 1943.

¹³ *Donauzeitung*, 20 October 1942.

¹⁴ *Grenzbote*, 21 October 1942; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 October 1942.

¹⁵ *Südost-Economist*, 10 December 1943.

Dnieper front created intense anxiety in Bucharest for the fate of Transnistria, and all Romanians living east of the Dniester received orders to move into the interior of Romania.¹⁶ The number of persons actually removed is not known, but on 12 November a United Press dispatch reported the evacuation of 'thousands of civilians threatened by the advancing Red Armies.'¹⁷

¹⁶ BBC broadcast, 28 October 1943.

¹⁷ *New York Times*, 13 November 1943.

PART V

CONCLUSIONS

XXXIV

Population Transfer in Retrospect and Prospect

I

EVENTS of the last thirty years have demonstrated with abundant clarity not only the significance of the minorities problem in Europe, but also the inadequacy of a League of Nations system of international protection as a solution. Harold Butler, one of the leading figures in the direction of the Geneva experiment and now British Minister Plenipotentiary in Washington, went so far as to state that 'as a method of applying the principle of self-determination the minority regime was a failure.' He flatly condemned the 'allotment of a special status to minorities,' arguing as follows: 'To accord them [the minorities] rights against their own governments, including the right of an appeal over their heads to an international tribunal, meant keeping the flame of old animosities alive and constantly feeding it with fresh fuel. The minorities were thus encouraged to reject any overtures from the majorities, while the majorities were in a state of perpetual exasperation at the non-cooperation of the minorities, which might in time of danger be converted overnight into a fifth column in their midst.'¹ Recent experience has proved that these fears were not unfounded.

The authors of the latest comprehensive study of the minorities treaties sadly acknowledge that it has become a commonplace to assert that these treaties were a failure. For their own part, they find several explanations and various extenuating cir-

¹ Butler, *The Lost Peace*, pp. 228-9.

circumstances for the ineffectual operation of the experiment, some inherent in the system itself, others external, and they are inclined to leniency in their judgment of its value. They confess, however, that they have not attempted 'to answer the abstruse question of whether minorities problems are by their nature capable of solution by legal means.'²

But this 'abstruse question' is the focal point of the whole minorities problem. With the end of World War II, we find ourselves faced with issues of the utmost gravity, which must be satisfactorily met by legal means if the peace is to be kept. A resurgence of nationalism throughout Europe is inevitable, and ethnic and political frontiers will play a prominent, even disproportionate, role in all discussions concerning future settlements, often even at the expense of economic considerations. Bernard Newman, who has made a thorough study on the scene of all European nationality questions, hardly exaggerated the case when he wrote that in a contest between economics and nationalism, the latter nearly always wins.³

Of the immediate problems, the most urgent, yet at the same time the simplest, concerns the 1.2 million Germans, more or less, who were 'repatriated' from Eastern and Southeastern Europe during the war years in accord with the policy proclaimed by Hitler in his speech of 6 October 1939, or simply evacuated from areas abandoned by the German armies in their retreat. There can be no question of a return to their former countries of residence, for the governments and peoples of these countries would never consent to such an arrangement.

A far more complicated problem is the fate of the millions of *Volksdeutsche*, autochthonous inhabitants of Polish, Czechoslovak, Romanian, Yugoslav, and other territories, minorities deeply rooted in the economic and political life of the country. Despite these ties, the German folk groups constituted a steadily

² Robinson *et al.*, *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?*, p. viii.

³ Newman, *The New Europe*, p. 53.

growing threat and during the war years they developed into an active fifth column. The governments of the affected nations have stated explicitly that their presence will no longer be tolerated. In Romania and Yugoslavia the German folk groups have practically disappeared. As for Czechoslovakia, according to Hubert Ripka, Minister of the Interior in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, 'the only Germans who can be allowed to remain in Czechoslovakia are those whose loyalty and civil reliability are beyond any doubt.'⁴

In the case of Poland there are not only the autochthonous *Volksdeutsche* but also the German population of German East Prussia and Silesia, incorporated into Poland as compensation for the Polish eastern provinces incorporated into the Soviet Union. The Poles, too, have made it clear that their country will not saddle herself with a strong, well-organized, and militant German irredentist minority. As early as August 1944, a Polish spokesman in London stated that bitter experience had proved that Germany's neighbors could not afford to harbor German minorities,⁵ and the Polish Committee for National Liberation, in a broadcast on 28 September 1944, stressed 'the infamous role played by the Germans in Poland during the German invasion and under the occupation. . . At present,' the statement continued, 'after such terrible experiences there can be no question of the German remaining in Poland after the war. . . Nothing must prevent us from removing these eternal enemies from our country.'

Paralleling this stand on the part of the sovereign governments is the strengthened intransigence of certain minority groups, due to events of the war years. For example, the Hungarians in the southern part of Transylvania, which Romania was forced to cede to Hungary in 1940, lived for four years

⁴ Ripka, *The Future of Czechoslovak Germans*, p. 18.

⁵ *New York Times*, 10 August 1944. See also Winiewicz, *The Polish-German Frontier*.

under the Hungarian regime and were part of the state-nation. Now, with the reincorporation of Southern Transylvania into Romania, it will be extremely painful for them to be returned to their previous minority status within the Romanian state. More than ever they will regard Hungary as the lost mother country, and nourishing rekindled irredentist hopes, they will constitute a perpetual menace to Romania and to the peace of Southeastern Europe.

Similar problems are present in a greater or less degree in connection with many other countries in Europe. And because it is patently impossible for any peace settlement to create a European order in which all states are nationally homogeneous, the opinion is gaining momentum that in several danger zones the answer to the territorial and minorities problems must be sought in an ethnic shifting of the minorities. It is felt that these persons should be resettled where they can become a part of larger ethnic groups whose language they speak, to whose customs they have the least antagonism, and to whom, spiritually, they owe allegiance.

II

The transfer plan is of relatively recent origin. It was in 1915 that Georges Montandon, a French scholar of Swiss origin and professor of ethnology at the Paris School of Anthropology, drew up a memorandum entitled *Frontières Nationales: Détermination objective de la condition primordiale nécessaire à l'obtention d'une paix durable*, which was published in connection with the first Conference des Nationalités held at Lausanne on 27-9 June 1916. The basic principle laid down in this memorandum was the delimitation of state frontiers according to ethnic criteria and the transfer of certain ethnic minority groups within these frontiers to secure their stability. In an article published a quarter of a century later, Montandon claims that his suggestion 'had a success which is ignored by the public,'

namely, that it inspired Fridtjof Nansen's proposal concerning the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey.⁶ In certain circles Montandon is credited with having invented the transfer idea.⁷

Another early sponsor of population transfers was the English Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill, who, in February 1919, expressed his conviction that 'race redistribution in the interests of the general world happiness is, I take it, one of the functions of the League of Nations, and one that must be executed in many parts of Europe.'⁸ In another article, Zangwill stressed that 'in some instances, where the chaos of populations is a menace to permanent settlement, there must be mutual adjustments, even (in the gravest cases) gradual measures of race distribution.'⁹ Other supporters of the transfer method were Professor Bernard Lavergne of the Lille University law faculty,¹⁰ Nansen, and the Greek Premier Venizelos; the latter two were ideologically and politically coresponsible for the Greco-Turkish population exchange.

Today, the transfer plan is being advocated by many responsible statesmen, scholars, and writers. Among those who see in the exchange of populations a solution for some of Europe's most acute problems are former President Herbert Hoover,¹¹ and former Ambassadors Hugh Gibson¹² and William C. Bullitt.¹³ Leopold C. Klausner, onetime director of the Pan-Euro-

⁶ Georges Montandon, 'La Pologne future,' in *Mercure de France*, 1 February 1940, p. 314.

⁷ Michel Pierrac, 'Les transferts de populations,' in *Voix des Peuples*, 15 October 1940, p. 466.

⁸ Quoted from *League of Nations Journal* in Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, pp. 103-5.

⁹ Quoted from *Asia* in Zangwill, op. cit. p. 106.

¹⁰ Bernard Lavergne, 'L'aggression hitlerienne et la France. Les échanges de populations,' in *L'Année Politique Française et Étrangère*, November 1939.

¹¹ Hoover and Gibson, *The Problem of Lasting Peace*, p. 233.

¹² Ibid. p. 233.

¹³ William C. Bullitt, 'A Constructive Solution,' in New Zionist Organization of America, *The American-British Convention on Palestine*, p. 29.

pean Union, is convinced that population transfer must be considered the best solution for minority problems in danger zones.¹⁴ Harold Butler¹⁵ and Nicolas Politis,¹⁶ former Greek Ambassador to France and an authority on international law, strongly advocate employment of the transfer method.

Imre Ferenczi, former population expert of the International Labour Office, is explicit in his support of the transfer plan.¹⁷ And Warren S. Thompson, one of the leading demographers in the United States, declared in a letter to the author written on 22 October 1943: 'As for myself, I have gradually come to feel that the resettlement of considerable populations in Europe is indispensable to the establishment of a peace which will have a chance to last for more than a few years.' A few months later Thompson gave public expression to this conviction, adding that whatever the hardships involved in the transfers, they were still to be preferred to the difficulties created by the unwilling existence of minorities in an alien land.¹⁸

Bernard Newman suggests the transfer and exchange of populations as a solution for the German-Polish, Polish-Soviet, and Soviet-Finnish border problems; he recommends an exchange of populations as a means of meeting the German problem in the Sudetenland and the question of the Magyar minority in Czechoslovakia, and he sees this as the only solution for the Yugoslav-Italian strife regarding Istria and the Hungarian-Romanian conflict over Transylvania.¹⁹ Other supporters of population transfer as a solution for the Transylvanian problem are Charles

¹⁴ Leopold C. Klausner, 'Danger Zones in Europe,' in *World Affairs Interpreter*, Summer 1944, p. 133.

¹⁵ Butler, op. cit. p. 229.

¹⁶ Nicolas Politis, 'Le transfert de populations,' in *Politique Étrangère*, April 1940, p. 89.

¹⁷ Imre Ferenczi, 'On Shifting Europe's Peoples,' in *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 March 1944.

¹⁸ Thompson, *Plenty of People*, pp. 196-7.

¹⁹ Newman, op. cit. pp. 131-2, 176, 228-9, 327, 416, 465.

Upton Clark,²⁰ a highly qualified student of Balkan problems, and Jacob Robinson,²¹ an authority on the international protection of minorities. In Transylvania itself, the newly appointed Prefect of Cluj, Teofil Vescan, recommends an exchange of populations in conjunction with certain territorial adjustments, and similar proposals were offered in the informal discussions on Transylvania that occurred in March 1945 in Rome, shortly before the definite transfer of the province to the new Bucharest government. Neither the Romanian nor the Hungarian participants in these talks represented the government of their countries at that time, but their suggestions may be considered representative of the opinion of influential political circles in Romania and Hungary.

In April 1944 the British Labour Party officially endorsed the proposed transfer of Palestinian Arabs to other Arab countries, and a year later the British Common Wealth party passed a similar resolution.²²

Czech and Polish spokesmen have formulated definite plans for a compulsory transfer of German minorities from the Sudetenland and Western Poland, perhaps in exchange for some 100,000 Wends from Saxony and 200,000 Czechs from Austria, and some 800,000 Poles from Germany proper, particularly the Ruhr Valley.²³ The Czech transfer plans have the support and approval of the German Social Democrats and Communists from Czechoslovakia, who, at a conference in London on 27 January 1945, adopted a corresponding resolution.²⁴ A similar stand has been taken by the Union of Czechoslovak Socialists in Sweden.²⁵ In December 1944, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile sub-

²⁰ Clark, *Racial Aspects of Romania's Case*, p. 19.

²¹ Robinson, 'Minorities in a Free World,' in *Free World*, May 1943, p. 454.

²² *Jewish Standard*, 28 April 1944 and 13 April 1945.

²³ *New York Times*, 10 August 1944.

²⁴ *Czechoslovak Press Bureau Bulletin*, 30 January 1945.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 28 January 1945.

mitted to the European Advisory Commission in London a detailed plan of the transfer scheme, and in March 1945 President Benes reported to his government that this proposal had been accepted by Marshal Stalin. It is important to note that such support is given to the plan despite the discouraging demographic and economic implications of the removal of 2 million inhabitants from a country whose prewar population was only 14.7 million. All objections are countered, however, by assertions that Czechoslovakia would rather be poorer for a time in return for a feeling of greater national security, and that economic factors must be subordinated to the internal unity of the Republic.²⁶

The governments of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States have all endorsed the transfer of populations as an important means of solving age-old ethnic and territorial conflicts. In September 1944, the Soviet Union concluded three agreements on the exchange of populations with the Polish provisional government. The British Prime Minister reported to the House of Commons on 15 December that he was not 'alarmed at the prospect of the disentanglement of population.' 'Nor even am I alarmed,' Mr. Churchill continued, 'by these large transferences which are more possible than they ever were before, through modern conditions.' Referring to the success of the Greco-Turkish exchange, he recommended a similar clean sweep with regard to the German population in the eastern provinces to be incorporated into Poland.²⁷ Three days later, United States Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius stated on behalf of his government that 'if . . . the government and people of Poland decide that it would be in the interests of the Polish state to transfer national groups, the United States in cooperation with other governments will assist Poland as far as practicable in such transfers.'²⁸

²⁶ Ripka, *op. cit.* p. 25.

²⁷ *New York Times*, 16 December 1944.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 19 December 1944.

A joint statement of the stand taken by the three great powers was incorporated in the Potsdam Declaration issued after the tripartite conference of 17 July-2 August 1945. This affirmed that 'having considered the question of the removal of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary . . . in all its aspects,' the conferees recognized that 'the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken.' The Big Three agreed that 'any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner' and that 'the Allied Control Council in Germany should in the first instance examine the problem with special regard to the question of the equitable distribution of these [transferred] Germans among the several zones of occupation.'²⁹

It is true, however, that there are those who do not share in the acceptance of population transfer. Many of these persons question the necessity for specific transfers or stress the disruption that they entailed, but there are also students of the problem who voice earnest objections to the very principle of transferring populations.

Thus Stelio Sfériades, who made an extensive study of pre-1939 operations, states categorically that from the point of view of the affected populations the exchange, even when carried out under the best conditions, was more than a misfortune; he himself does not hesitate to describe the system as criminal.³⁰ Stephen P. Ladas, referring to the Greco-Turkish exchange, expresses his doubts on whether it was the only possible solution of the problem, and suggests that 'wise statesmanship and great foresight could have avoided the surgical operation.'³¹

Sir John Hope Simpson, who was vice-president of the League

²⁹ *New York Times*, 3 August 1945.

³⁰ Sfériades, 'L'échange des populations,' in *Académie de Droit International, Recueil de Cours*, 1928, p. 430.

³¹ Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, pp. 724, 729, 730.

of Nations Refugee Settlement Committee in Athens from 1926 to 1930, admits that only a compulsory population exchange offers an adequate solution for hopelessly complicated minority problems, but he emphasizes that it is an 'inhumane, indeed a cruel, remedy, entailing much suffering and hardship on the unfortunates to whom it is applied.' In his opinion the conditions that may ensure the success of a population exchange can be found only in the rarest instances, and therefore the system cannot be regarded as a satisfactory general solution for minority population problems.³²

Benes's appeal for a wholesale transfer of European minority groups,³³ which was referred to with approval by the influential liberal English weekly, *Spectator*,³⁴ has been vigorously challenged by David Thomson, who asserts that nearly all historical evidence tends to prove that large-scale transfers of population involve enormous personal hardship and injustice, and that the creation of uninational states may well promote and intensify exclusive nationalism.³⁵

And lastly, Professor Erich Hula of the New School for Social Research, disagreeing with a *New York Herald Tribune* editorial favoring population exchange as a device for creating a more stable European order, has proclaimed as futile 'any attempt to base the political system of Europe on the ethnic units of her population.' He rejects the idea also from a moral point of view, contending that it involves the 'recognition of collective rights as against individual rights by degrading man to an appurtenance of the race to which he is supposed to belong.'³⁶

³² John Hope Simpson, 'The Exchange of Population,' in *The Spectator*, 5 December 1941, p. 530.

³³ Eduard Benes, 'The New Order in Europe,' in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, September 1941, p. 155.

³⁴ 'The Europe of Tomorrow' in *Spectator*, 12 September 1941, pp. 251-2.

³⁵ Thomson, 'Back to Minority Problems,' in *Spectator*, 19 September 1941, pp. 279-80.

³⁶ Erich Hula, 'Exchange of Populations,' in *New York Herald Tribune*, 11 February 1944.

III

The foregoing chapters of the present study have indicated the difficulty of drawing from experience any generally valid conclusions regarding the necessity for, or the success or failure of, individual transfer undertakings. In each case the answer depends wholly on the surrounding conditions, and no final conclusion is possible until enough time has passed to make possible an evaluation of results. And even then, such an evaluation can never be categorical. So many considerations are involved that a final judgment can rest only on a weighing of pros and cons, a balancing of immediate and ultimate effects, and a realistic appraisal of possible alternatives.

The Greco-Turkish exchange of population, since it was one of the earliest organized undertakings of this kind, offers the most abundant evidence for appraising the relative benefits and disadvantages of such an operation for the two countries involved. There is no question that for Greece the absorption of more than 1.25 million destitute refugees constituted a tremendous burden. At least one authority believes that any apparent benefits produced by the exchange 'developed somewhat accidentally,' and that similar results might have been achieved without subjecting the population to the disaster of compulsory repatriation.³⁷ Other students have gone even further, stressing certain essential disadvantages for Greece. They argue that the country was overpopulated even before the exchange, and that through the transfer its population increased by 22 per cent, the resultant acute population pressure being further aggravated by a continued high birth rate.³⁸ In particular, 'the influx of refugees led to dangerous over-urbanization and to an undesirable

³⁷ Moseley, *Repatriation of Greeks, Turks, and Bulgars after the Greco-Turkish War*, p. 178.

³⁸ Irene B. Täuber, 'Population Dislocations in Europe,' in *World Economics*, January 1943, pp. 2-3.

expansion in the number of middlemen and small artisans.'³⁹ Moreover, it is held that the foreign and domestic loans raised for settlement and general reconstruction work at a high rate of interest necessitated particularly heavy taxation, and that the external liabilities of the state, exceeding its resources, contributed to the bankruptcy of 1932.⁴⁰

On the whole, however, the prevailing opinion is that Greece profited from the exchange. The cadastral, hydrographic, and geological surveys which preceded the settlement operations resulted in the reclamation of barren, poorly developed land, and the introduction of modern farming methods that greatly improved the country's agriculture. The establishment of co-operative marketing and credit schemes, the influx of new capital, and a large supply of cheap labor facilitated industrialization.⁴¹ Each year the resettlers paid, in indirect taxes, amounts that more than offset the cost of loans subscribed by the Treasury for their installation.⁴² And, by no means least in importance, Greece attained a homogeneity of population through the transfer that could have been achieved in no other way. In 1920 Greeks constituted only 80 per cent of the entire population of the kingdom; by 1928 the proportion had risen to nearly 94 per cent, while the percentage of Turks had decreased from 14 to less than 2.⁴³

As for Turkey, the results of the exchange have been judged favorable from the political point of view but economically unfortunate. It has even been claimed that the transfer paralyzed Turkey's economic and financial life.⁴⁴ The 366,000 Turkish

³⁹ Simpson, *Refugees*, p. 21; Ladas, op. cit. pp. 727-8.

⁴⁰ Simpson, *Refugees*, p. 21; Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, p. 448.

⁴¹ Streit, *Der Lausanner Vertrag und der griechisch-türkische Bevölkerungsaustausch*, pp. 55-7.

⁴² Politis, op. cit. p. 91.

⁴³ A. A. Pallis, 'The Greek Census of 1928,' in *Geographical Journal*, June 1939, pp. 543 ff.

⁴⁴ Macartney, op. cit. p. 448.

repatriates from Greece could in no way fill the places of the Greeks driven from Asia Minor, not only because they were insufficient in number (1.2 million Greeks left Turkey), but also because they were almost exclusively peasants. Their contribution to the commercial, industrial, and cultural life of Turkey was completely at variance with that made by the transferred Greek population.⁴⁵ In view of the peculiar fact that Turkey differs markedly from all other Balkan countries by being relatively underpopulated, this displacement in her economy was particularly serious.

But such a discrepancy in the various effects produced by population transfer is practically inevitable. The essential question is how the aggregate effects compare with the effects of alternative measures. This approach to the problem was well exemplified by the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet*, writing on 20 October 1934:

Those who have studied the problem have found exchanges to be bad from a human viewpoint, economically disadvantageous, but politically indispensable. In our opinion, this question cannot be studied by subdividing it into various phases. No undertaking can be bad from a human viewpoint and good politics. An enterprise is either bad or good. To call it indispensable from a political viewpoint is to admit that it must be carried out at any cost. It may well be that opinion was divided as to whether the exchange was decided upon at the proper moment, but the friendly character of the Greco-Turk relations since the Lausanne Treaty no longer leaves any doubts as to the timeliness of the exchange.

And there can be no doubt that the age-old conflict between the two countries was resolved after the transfer was carried through. Greece definitely abandoned her ancient dream of expansion in Asia Minor and conquest of Constantinople, and this, according to Donald Everest Webster, was 'a primary step in initiating an era of progressively intensive cooperation be-

⁴⁵ Simpson, *Refugees*, p. 18.

twœen peoples long at odds.'⁴⁶ Emil Lengyel is no less categorical on this point: 'Now for the first time in many centuries all the principal problems between Greek and Turk were solved. The transfer of population engendered good will rather than the reverse. From that day on the two countries lived as friends.'⁴⁷ And Ernest Jäckh, for many years a penetrating student of Turkish affairs, also stated that 'only through the exchange of minorities could a new Turkish-Greek relationship be created. At first, it was a *detente* only, but it turned into an *entente* and eventually grew into an alliance in 1933.'⁴⁸

As a warning, however, on the difficulty of making any ultimate historical judgments it should be pointed out that since 1923 the two countries have had only a very short stretch of common frontier, and that each country has much longer and more exposed frontiers with its other neighbors. During the past decade, the new-found friendship between Greece and Turkey may have been based as much on their common desire to keep Bulgaria isolated, and, since 1935, on their growing dread of Italian aggression, as on the elimination of the minority question.

The Greco-Bulgarian population exchange (1919-30), although it, too, occurred in the inter-war period, was ultimately entangled in the twisting fortunes of the new war. The exchange resulted in the virtual disappearance of the Greek minority in Bulgaria, while a substantial Bulgarian minority retained its foothold in Greece. Despite this discrepancy it was generally agreed that the exchange 'cleared the relations between the two countries of many troublesome matters,' and that it resulted in the gradual creation of a better atmosphere between them.⁴⁹ The manifold adjustments between the resettlers and their new environment were effected satisfactorily. As Ladas wrote in the

⁴⁶ Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk*, p. 114.

⁴⁷ Lengyel, *Turkey*, p. 387.

⁴⁸ Jäckh, *The Rising Crescent*, p. 210.

⁴⁹ Ladas, *op. cit.* p. 724.

early thirties, 'There is no reason why these rural emigrants, now firmly settled in their new homes and fields, should seek to uproot themselves yet once more in order to return to their old seats.'⁵⁰ A decade later, however, the results of this transfer were largely upset by a change in the political relationship of the two countries. Just as soon as the opportunity presented itself, following the collapse of Greek resistance in 1941, Bulgaria occupied Greek Macedonia and western Thrace and made a ruthless attempt to reverse the ethnic balance of these provinces as established by the implementation of the Neuilly Treaty. Bulgarians that had been transferred under that treaty were moved back to Greek Macedonia and Thrace, and had to be removed once again after the surrender of Bulgaria.

With regard to the transfers of World War II the circumstances were especially confused by extraneous factors arising from the war-time political conditions. Moreover, the numerous shifts in the military situation led in some cases to a change of sovereignty in the areas where population transfers had occurred, and even to new transfers of the same groups, or to mass flight. The only large-scale projects in recent years were those concerning the resettlement of the German folk groups, and these in particular were based on a specific combination of artificially created circumstances that can hardly be expected to recur. The German resettlers were brought to regions from which large sections of the native population had been deported in order to 'make room' for them, and the personal possessions, real estate, dwellings, and business enterprises of the deportees were given to the newcomers. It is obvious that results achieved in this way can hardly be considered indicative of what may be called normal resettlement conditions.

In the incorporated Polish areas, despite the carefully scheduled mass deportations of the local Polish and Jewish population,

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 723. See also Wurf Bain, *L'échange Greco-Bulgare des minorités ethniques*, p. 132.

the installation of the incoming Germans proved to be a very difficult, and above all, a protracted undertaking. The only group among the resettlers who were established quickly and easily were the urban dwellers, and this was rendered possible by the special circumstance that more of the local population had been ousted from the liberal professions and from business than there were Germans to replace them. Only the Balts included a high percentage of professional people and businessmen; all other transferred groups were largely agricultural. It was therefore relatively simple to set up the urban group in the vacancies created by the deportations. The settlement of peasants—even with all the careful planning, the tremendous number of confiscated Polish farms, the abundance and high quality of agricultural implements, and constant supervision by qualified agricultural consultants—met with serious difficulties. Soil and climatic conditions were strange to the newcomers, and the trustee system for managing the allotted farms proved to be of questionable value; cases of mismanagement appear to have been frequent, and the economy of the appointed administrators of the small farms was conservative, not to say backward.

Deportation of large portions of the local population also provided the basis for the German resettlement policy in incorporated Yugoslav Lower Styria, as well as for Hungarian resettlement activities in the Yugoslav province of Bachka, and for the Ustashi resettlement policy in Croatia. Disregarding the moral unacceptability of these rapacious ventures, they were too limited in scope and too short-lived to yield any conclusive proof as to the efficiency of their administration.

The installation of 61,000 transferred Bulgarians in Southern Dobruja, on farms and houses that had belonged to the 100,000 transferred Romanians, was carried out without difficulty and within a short period. But the resettlement of 100,000 Romanians in Northern Dobruja, whence only 61,000 Bulgarians had departed, was far more complicated, and some 25,000 Dobruja

repatriates were still unsettled at the end of 1944. The disparity between Bulgaria and Romania in the success of their respective resettlement projects may be attributed in part to the greater competence and honesty of the Bulgarian resettlement authorities. This exchange may well prove to be final. There is no evidence that Romania will claim the return of Southern Dobruja, and relations between the two countries are now as cordial as they have been for many decades.

In Finland it was found difficult to resettle the transferred Karelians and Ingermanlanders because their installation had to be effected with only the country's own limited means. Furthermore, the attitude of the local population, especially the Swedish part of it, was not always friendly and co-operative. Thus, some 70 per cent of the Ingermanlanders preferred to return to their former homelands in the Soviet Union, but the 400,000 Karelians, efficiently aided by the government, have successfully continued their efforts to integrate themselves with the Finnish economy.

In view of all the evidence provided by past experience it cannot be denied that the redistribution of ethnic groups is a painful operation for the persons concerned, or that it may cause, at least for a time, serious difficulties in the economic life of the country of departure and the country of resettlement. The disruptive incidence of the operation cannot be overlooked and should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, there may be situations when the alternatives are even less desirable. And where this is the case, transfer remains as the only solution. As one observer has said, 'to cut out the cancer from a sick body is not cruel, it is necessary.'⁵¹ Only false sentimentality or blindness to the best interests of the patient would permit pity to outweigh sound medical judgment.

Fortunately, most diseases do not require surgical treatment.

⁵¹ Klausner, *op. cit.* p. 133.

Any serious and responsible physician considers every other possible means of effecting a cure, and has recourse to the scalpel only as a last resort. And so it is with the drastic remedy of population transfer. It is by no means a universal method of solving all minority problems, and should not be applied until all other agencies have been explored. In some cases, fair treatment of an ethnic minority by the state under an international Bill of Rights will suffice. In others, treaties between interested countries securing the rights of the respective minorities may be the best way out, while in still others an improved and more effective machinery of international supervision along the lines of the League of Nations formula may furnish a workable pattern. The Soviet policy with regard to national minorities offers another apparently satisfactory solution. When and if there is a fair chance that any one of these procedures might serve the purpose, it must be given an honest trial. The transfer of populations should be decided on only in the last instance, not as an ideal solution, but as a necessary evil.

IV

If transfer is deemed necessary—and there is every indication that the peace planners view it as a logical means for settling many grave minorities problems in Europe—certain inferences can be drawn from earlier experience with regard to the procedure of transfer operations. Certainly no detailed specifications can be derived from the achievements and errors of the past, but certain broad principles that may serve as guides do emerge from what is, on the whole, a confused and inconclusive picture.

In the first place, the most careful planning and organization are essential. The transfer of populations is an extremely complicated procedure, involving not only political, economic, and psychological factors, but also such practical considerations as transportation, housing, and hygiene. And these elements are so

closely interwoven that lack of foresight with regard to any one of them may jeopardize the success of an entire operation.

In this connection the extremely careful organization of the transfer of the German minorities, which contrasts so strongly with the far less orderly character of transfers conducted prior to 1939, is worth noting. The first evacuations from Estonia and Latvia were entrusted to local German bodies, but for almost all later major transfers specially trained resettlement squads were sent by the Reich to conduct operations. In Northern Bukovina, where the German minority included a strong intelligentsia, local elements worked in close collaboration with the resettlement squad. This experience indicates that a reasonable and elastic combination of a small but highly trained evacuation personnel with certain qualified elements among the prospective transferees possesses considerable advantages.

The results of past transfers suggest also that speed is essential. This conclusion is entirely contrary to the common belief that to render population transfers successful and less painful for the persons concerned the operation should be spread over a period of years.⁵² Actually, only those transfers that were effected within the limits of a few weeks or months were fully realized. The two transfers to which no blitz tempo was applied—the Greco-Bulgarian exchange of 1919-30 and the transfer of South Tyrol Germans scheduled for a three-year period—failed to achieve their objective of eliminating the minority groups. Such undertakings can be effected only with one swift stroke. Complicated and painful as the process may be, it becomes no less so when prolonged for months or years. The majority of the German-organized transfers, which, on the whole, functioned the most smoothly, were executed in the course of a few weeks, and were completed far in advance of the stipulated deadlines. Experience has shown that a speedy migration is techni-

⁵² Newman, *op. cit.* p. 25.

cally feasible, and that, when properly organized, it imposes no excessive physical hardship and even tempers psychological and moral distress.

Although railroads and ships offer the obvious means of moving masses of people easily and with dispatch, the wartime population transfers proved that these transportation methods are far from being the only practicable ones. Trucks and horse- or oxen-drawn carts were successfully utilized for the speedy evacuation of hundreds of thousands of persons. A major problem of organization in itself is the synchronized timing of trains and of the truck and cart convoys, and the establishment of properly spaced and equipped feeding centers for men and cattle.

Adequate hygienic and medical care is an essential that need hardly be emphasized. Careful provisions of this kind can do a great deal to mitigate the hardships of transfer and to check the spread of epidemic diseases, so common in mass displacements. In the vast German-organized projects, sickness and mortality rates were amazingly low. Since such results were possible under wartime conditions, it is clear that, in peacetime, medical care and also transportation can be organized on an even wider and more efficient scale.

Settlement of the property interests of the transferred persons is probably the most difficult and thankless task associated with these operations. In the transfers studied in this book, the export by the evacuees of their cash and movable property was limited by either necessary or arbitrary restrictions imposed by the governments of the countries they were leaving, and by the capacity of the transportation facilities used in the transfer. Wherever the country of departure attempted to compensate every resettler for the property left behind, on the basis of an evaluation of each individual property by a mixed commission representing both countries, the effort invariably failed. The procedure for such evaluation and for the subsequent compensation, made di-

rectly to individuals or through the medium of the government of the receiving country, proved to be exceedingly long, highly complicated, and controversial, and it was obviously unsatisfactory to all the interested parties. The transferees themselves were the most affected by the inherent shortcomings of this system, which were frequently accentuated by the lack of good will on the part of the authorities in the country of departure.

Although there is no actual evidence to support the contention, it may well be that an advance mass evaluation of the property to be left behind by the group subject to transfer would provide the best basis for property settlements. This method was stipulated in the Soviet-German agreement of 10 January 1941 with regard to the property of the German folk groups transferred from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, but the outbreak of the Soviet-German war barred the effectuation of the financial aspects of the accord. The principle is nevertheless sound. The amount of the mass evaluation and the payment schedule could be agreed on by the states that are party to the transfer treaty and could be stipulated in the treaty. This amount could be paid by the country of departure to the country of reception in cash or goods or any other acceptable medium. The government of the receiving country could then take over the full responsibility for adequate compensation of the transferees, independent of the payments made by the other contracting country. Just compensation for each individual could be established by the authorities of the country of reception, on the basis of data presented by the settlers themselves and verified by the authorities. This compensation could be made in kind or in cash. But since such an undertaking obviously exceeds the financial capacity of any single state, international loans would seem to be prerequisite to the successful application of this system.

The evidence of past transfers refutes the popular belief that only townfolk are receptive to a call for mass transplantation, and that 'the great majority of peasants do not choose to give

up home and community ties for the country of the national flag.' ⁵³ This proverbial inertia of rural groups proved to be far less than generally assumed. In all cases covered by this study, the peasants were that part of the population subject to transfer who were most willing and eager to move. Almost a hundred per cent of the farmers, when given the opportunity, expressed readiness to go, while the comparatively few instances of reluctance or opposition occurred only in the towns. To be sure the decisions to leave were not wholly spontaneous, but certainly no less pressure and propaganda were applied in the urban than in the rural areas. Perhaps one reason for this development is that the peasant outlook, particularly in the more backward countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, is usually purely local. The peasant belongs to his farm, his village. Apparently, if he is promised a good piece of land, and if his village neighbors are being moved with him, he can be happy; no extreme hardship is involved in exchanging one farm for another. The simpler the form of civilization, the easier the exchange. In towns, where the degree of civilization is higher, the reluctance to leave familiar haunts, superior facilities, and a distinctive way of life appears to be much greater.

Where the transfer of population can take the form of an interstate exchange of ethnic groups, rather than a unilateral transfer of a single group from one state to another, the chances of success seem to be better. The mutual character of an exchange eliminates any suspicion of discrimination against the affected minorities. It facilitates the settlement of property interests by opening the way to a mutual adjustment of claims, thus reducing to a minimum any direct payments for the property abandoned by the transferees. And finally, it aids the resettlement of the transferred persons in their new homelands by pro-

⁵³ W. Friedman, 'Multi-National States,' in *The Fortnightly*, May 1944, p. 288.

viding for the repatriates land, houses, and employment opportunities vacated by the evacuees. It is true that there is not likely to be a numerical equality between the exchanged population groups. Furthermore, the exchanged groups can be expected to be quite disparate in their occupational structure, and it is clearly not possible to replace evacuated merchants, skilled workers, or artisans with repatriated peasants or professionally trained persons. But even with a generous allowance for such obstacles, the exchange of populations offers considerably greater possibility for success than a simple unilateral transfer.

v

Undoubtedly the most far-reaching question posed by the scheme of population transfer is that of compulsion. This problem, touching as it does on the nature of individual rights, goes, of course, beyond mere procedure and becomes a matter of political philosophy. To be sure, considerations of this character will have little bearing on the future disposition of the German minorities, for theirs is the fate of a defeated people. But, in general, the subject of population transfer cannot be contemplated without regard for its implications concerning the fundamental question of authority *versus* individual rights.

Of all the transfer treaties concluded and implemented in the period between 1920 and 1944, only two made the transfer legally compulsory: the Greco-Turkish treaty signed at Lausanne on 30 January 1923, and the Bulgarian-Romanian treaty concluded at Craiova on 7 September 1940. Both instruments dealt with exchange of population. A number of other transfers discussed in this study were effected unilaterally, by decision of the government ruling over the territories from which or to which the transfer was made (the exchange of Germans from the Lublin area in the Government General for Polish peasants from the Warthegau, the transfer of the Karelian peasants to Finland

proper, and the like). The majority, however, proceeded on the basis of interstate treaties providing for the right of option by the populations concerned.⁵⁴ The historically established form of option clause in such treaties provides that only those persons who desire to change their citizenship and to leave the country of their residence are required to state their wishes explicitly. Those who remain silent on the subject are *ipso facto* regarded as intending to stay.

By and large, leading jurists and students of minority problems agree that unconditionally compulsory transfer is wholly inconsistent with democratic concepts of human rights.⁵⁵ There is something deeply shocking in the idea that human beings may be indiscriminately transferred or exchanged like goods or cattle, without having any legal right to protest or appeal. Among the prospective evacuees there are certain to be some for whom the abandonment of their homeland and resettlement in another country entail insupportable tragedy. In such cases, irrespective of their number, it would be needlessly cruel and a violation of the principle of individual self-determination to compel departure, withholding all legal means of obtaining exemption from the transfer.

On the other hand, the conventional option clause, requiring a registration of intention only from those who wish to go, constitutes a serious threat to any transfer operation. Even though the members of a minority group may suffer bitterly from the tensions imposed by their abnormal situation, for many of them, resettlement appears to be too radical a solution of their

⁵⁴ The option clauses of the transfer treaties concluded by the Reich are treated in detail in Appendix III.

⁵⁵ See Dupart, *La protection des minorités de race, de langue et de religion*, p. 218 ff.; Andre Mandelstamm, 'La protection des minorités,' in *Académie de Droit International, Recueil des Cours* 1923, bd. 1, p. 416; C. G. Tenekides, 'Le statut des minorités' et l'échange obligatoire des populations grecques et turques,' in *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, Deuxième Série, bd. 6, p. 86; Hoexter, *Bevölkerungsaustausch als Institut des Völkerrechts*, pp. 52-4.

problems; and if they can evade the issue by sheer inaction, great numbers of them are likely to take that course. Confronted with a difficult choice, they will do nothing at all rather than take any initiative, even though inaction is in itself a decision. Only a fraction of the ethnic minority will actively manifest a wish for resettlement.

Thus, since inertia is so dominant a factor in human life, the conventional method of opting favors the perpetuation of the *status quo*. It causes the scales to be heavily weighted in advance in favor of conservative anti-transfer inclinations. The inert mass, merely by refraining from option, will perpetuate the existence of the minority group in the disputed area, thus defeating the whole purpose of the transfer. And this situation only adds to the strained relations that provoked the transfer expedient in the first place, for it leads the interested governments to propaganda campaigns and pressure tactics. These efforts can certainly increase the vote for resettlement, but they also increase the tenseness of the conflict and, if pushed far enough to be wholly effective, make the 'voluntary' character of the operation merely farcical.

These observations are amply corroborated by the evidence of past transfers. In the few cases where the affected populations were truly free to opt for transfer or not to vote at all, the majority refrained from expressing their intentions and thus undermined the whole project. In the other wartime transfers which formally provided for the right of option, the minorities were in actual practice subjected to such strong administrative pressures and to such powerful psychological, political, and economic stimuli that there was little genuine freedom of choice. Even among these merely pseudo-voluntary operations there were some that only partially succeeded in overcoming the natural reaction to cling to the *status quo*, however unsatisfactory; thus, despite the pressures, the legal option clause made it possible for such sizable minorities as 21 per cent of the Balts (1939-

40 transfer) and 30 per cent of the South Tyrolean Germans to remain in their homelands. On the whole, the transfer treaties providing for option either ended in failure or in actual practice lost their voluntary character.

A transfer of population, it can be assumed, is decided upon only as an inescapable last resort, an essential measure of national policy. It is granted that it must not become a mass deportation, which ignores the individual situations that are properly exceptions to the majority solution. But, equally, a measure of this seriousness must not be doomed to failure by an irresponsible and, in practice, only pseudo-genuine reliance on the 'free expression of will.' If it is decided upon at all it must be carried through with all the authority used in enforcing any other matter of national interest.⁵⁶

In any state there are many demands made in the interest of the community which the members of the group must conform with, regardless of their personal wishes. Vaccination is compulsory. Education of children is compulsory. Quarantine is compulsory when epidemics spread, and in cases of fire, flood, or military attack evacuation is often compulsory. There can be no plebiscite for the hundreds or thousands of families in the trajectory of an avalanche. In all such cases the wishes or sentiments of the persons involved are simply ignored. The determining factor in administrative action is the welfare of the community—which, in the long run, coincides with the best interests of the individuals.

⁵⁶ Whether the transfer be reciprocal or unilateral, the preventive aspect of the measure must be emphasized in presenting it to the groups concerned. Transferring a minority, even when the removal is made compulsory, is neither a punitive nor a retaliatory measure. It is not a chastening of an ethnic group for the 'bad behavior' of all or part of its members, while at the same time another group is apparently being rewarded for 'good behavior' by being permitted to remain in their homes. To introduce the criterion of good or bad is a distortion of the basic idea of the transfer scheme. The mere suggestion of guilt degrades the transfer to a deportation.

The members of a minority group, just because they are so immediately concerned, lack the perspective needed for viewing the situation in its broader aspects and for choosing a courageous way out. They are the last to be consulted on the matter, and the least qualified to make a wise decision. The question of war and peace between two neighboring countries, and perhaps of war and peace for the whole of Europe, cannot be dependent on the vote, and the probable inertia, of so and so many heads of families constituting a border minority.

Thus it is essential to evolve a system for population transfers that will recognize the hard political exigencies of the problem and at the same time make due allowances for the inalienable rights of individuals.

The legal innovation of a reversed option clause is offered as a solution. It would operate in the following manner. In principle, the transfer of a minority group from one state to another, if agreed on by the interested governments or by an authorized international body, would be considered an all-inclusive measure. Every member of the affected minority, without exception, would be subject to transfer and would not be expected to make any specific option for resettlement. But if any individual should desire to be exempted from the transfer, and to be allowed to maintain his present legal status, he would be required to opt explicitly for the retention of his citizenship and residence. The exemption would be granted automatically, not as a privilege, but as a right, unless there were specific charges of disloyalty against the claimant; it would, however, be regarded as an exception only, without prejudice to the sweeping character of the transfer. This right of reversed option would introduce an essential and salutary modification of the basically obligatory nature of the population transfer by leaving the way open for as many individual decisions against resettlement as desired.

For the persons who should choose to remain in the country of their residence, there would be no question of forcible

expulsion. Such persons, however, would remain as individuals only, not as members of a minority group. They would have to relinquish all the rights formerly contingent on their minority status, retaining only the rights and obligations of the state of which they decided to remain citizens. Irrespective of their number, they would never again be granted international or constitutional recognition as political and legal entities with the potentiality for becoming storm centers. They would forfeit the right to use their mother tongue in public life; their children would be taught at school in the language of the majority; no autonomous cultural or welfare institutions would be permitted. Complete and speedy assimilation would be the fate of the optants. They would have to be made fully aware of the conditions and they would have to accept them in advance.

This is a bold and hard solution, but it is the only one worth trying. The purpose of a population transfer is not to remove a high percentage of a minority group from the country of its residence, but to remove a minority problem, to eliminate a threat to the future. There are only two alternatives. In countries where there is reasonable hope for a peaceable life for minority groups within the state-nation and where a transfer is not absolutely essential, maximum security and rights must be guaranteed to the minorities. But if population transfer is deemed unavoidable, there must be no trace of the collective minority existence left, no stuff for the resurgence of the minority problem. There is no third solution.

At this juncture of history it is unwise to concentrate on short-term rather than long-term policies. Half-measures, palliatives, delays simply will not do; they are definite errors in a period when the entire world is seeking a new basis for lasting peace. A radical course must be inaugurated when the sense of urgency is strongest; it can hardly be resorted to a decade or two after the end of the war. No one can minimize the difficulties and risks contingent on quick, decisive action. But if the

swift, clean stroke is rejected in favor of more orthodox solutions that appear 'safer' and easier of attainment, but which are in reality no solution at all and can be productive only of further hazards and more lasting complications, a truly great historical opportunity will have been lost.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

TRANSFER OF MINORITIES IN EUROPE, 1939-45 *

<i>Ethnic Nationality</i>	<i>Area of Residence</i>	<i>Number of Persons Evacuated</i>	<i>Period of Evacuation</i>	<i>Place of Resettlement</i>
German	Italian S. Tyrol	100,000	July 1939- (Treaty of 21 Oct. 1939)	Austrian N. Tyrol; Carinthia. Also Lorraine; Luxem- bourg; Sudeten; S. Styria German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	Estonia	12,900	Oct. 1939-May 1940 (Treaty of 15 Oct. 1939)	German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	Latvia	48,600	Oct. 1939-40 (Treaty of 30 Oct. 1939)	German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	USSR-inc. Latvia & Estonia	16,200	Jan.-Mar. 1941 (Treaty of 10 Jan. 1941)	German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	USSR-inc. Lithuania	50,000	Jan.-Mar. 1941 (Treaty of 10 Jan. 1941)	German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	USSR-inc. Wol- hynia, Galicia and Narew Dis- trict	128,000	Nov. 1939-Feb. 1940 (Treaty of 3 Nov. 1939)	German-incorporated Polish provinces
German	USSR-inc. Bessara- bia	93,500	Sept.-Oct. 1940 (Treaty of 5 Sept. 1940)	German-inc. Polish prov- inces. Also Government General; German-inc. Yugoslavia; Lower Styria; Central Germany

German	USSR-inc. N. Bukovina	42,400	Sept.-Nov. 1940 (Treaty of 5 Sept. 1940)	German-inc. Polish provinces. Also Government General; Lower Styria
German	Leningrad & N. Ingermanland areas; Luga and Shlisselburg	3,800	Jan.-Mar. 1942	Government General (2,100)
German	Area under jurisdiction of Heeresgruppe-Mitte & White Russian Commissariat General	10,500	Jan.-July 1943	[Drafted for labor service in Reich]
German	N. Caucasus; Donbas; Kalmuck Steppe	11,500	Feb. 1943	Government General; Warthegau
German	Ukraine	72,000	Oct. 1943-Mar. 1944	German-inc. Polish provinces
German	Black Sea area; S. Ukraine	73,000	Aug. 1943-May 1944	German-inc. Polish provinces
German	Soviet E. Wolhynia	44,600	Oct. 1943-May 1944	German-inc. Polish provinces
German	Transnistria	135,000	May-July 1944	German-inc. Polish provinces
German	Government General	30,000	Sept.-Oct. 1940	German-inc. Polish provinces

* This table records the main transfers cited in this book, including those effected under the terms of interstate treaties, in accordance with the unilateral decision of a single state, and under the pressure of military developments. It provides only a general picture of the transfers, and the body of the text must be consulted for the necessary qualifying remarks. (For example, the ethnic nationality of a group is given as German if the group was predominantly German; the group may, however, have included substantial numbers of persons of other ethnic nationality.) Figures are only approximate and must be evaluated in the light of the sources indicated in the text and footnotes.

TRANSFER OF MINORITIES IN EUROPE, 1939-45—(Continued)

<i>Ethnic Nationality</i>	<i>Area of Residence</i>	<i>Number of Persons Evacuated</i>	<i>Period of Evacuation</i>	<i>Place of Resettlement</i>
German	German-occupied Soviet areas	10,000	1942	German-occupied Soviet Wollhynia
German	S. Bukovina	55,250	Nov.-Dec. 1940 (Treaty of 22 Oct. 1940)	German-inc. Polish provinces. Also Lower Styria. Government General
German	N. Dobruja	14,500	Nov.-Dec. 1940 (Treaty of 22 Oct. 1940)	German-inc. Polish provinces
German	Transylvania	?	1944	The Reich
German	Serbia	1,900	Dec. 1941	Government General
German	Serbian Banat	?	1944	Soviet Union
German	Yugoslav Voivodina (Bačka, Baranya, Banat)	?	1944	Soviet Union
German	Gottschew area	13,500	1942	German-inc. Slovenia & Carinthia
German	Croatia	30,000	Oct.-Dec. 1942 (Treaty of 6 Oct. 1942)	Government General
German	Bulgaria	1,400	Dec. 1941; April 1942	Germany
German	Bulgarian-annexed Macedonia; W. Thrace	800	Jan.-April 1943 (Treaty of 22 Jan. 1943)	Government General

Ukrainian, White Rus- sian & Rus- sian	German-dominated Polish provinces	35,000(?)	Feb. 1940 (Treaty of 3 Nov. 1939)	Sovi Union
Lithuanian, Russian & White Rus- sian	Memel region; Suwalki area	21,300	Jan.-Mar. 1941 (Treaty of 10 Jan. 1941)	Soviet Union
Polish	Ukrainian, White Russian & Li thuanian SSR	?	Dec. 1944- (Treaties of Sept. 1944)	Pol
Ukrainian, White Rus- sian & Rus- sian	Poland	?	Dec. 1944-	Sovi Union
German	Volga region	400,000	Autumn 19	Siberia; Soviet Central Asia
Finnish	Karelia	400,000	Dec. 1939-Mar.	Finland
Finnish	Finland	265,000	1941-	Karelia
Finnish	Karelia	250,000	1944	Finland
Ingerman- landers	Ingermanland a USSR	65,000	1943-	Finland
Ingerman- landers	Finland	46,000		Sovi Union
Swedish	Estonia	6,450	1940	Sweden
Bulgarian	N. Dobruja	61,000	Oct. 1940 (Sept. 1940)	S. Dobruja

TRANSFER OF MINORITIES IN EUROPE, 1939-45—(Continued)

<i>Ethnic Nationality</i>	<i>Area of Residence</i>	<i>Number of Persons Evacuated</i>	<i>Period of Evacuation</i>	<i>Place of Retilement</i>
Romanian	S. Dobruja	100,000	Sept.-Dec. 1940 (Treaty of 7 Sept. 1940)	N. Dobruja. Also Bessarabia; Bukovina
Bulgarian	Bulgaria	122,000	1942-May 1943	Bulgarian-annexed E. Macedonia; W. Thrace
Romanian	N. Transylvania	218,900	1940-5 Vienna award, 10 Aug.	Romania
	S. Transylvania	160,000(?)	1940-3 Vienna award, 30 Aug.	Hungary
Hungarian (Szeklers)	N. Bukovina	15,600	May-June 1940	Hungarian-annexed Yugoslav Bačka
Hungarian	Moldavia	1,600	Mar.-Sept. 1942	Hungarian-annexed Yugoslav Bačka
Hungarian	Bessarabia	?	Oct. 1941-	Hungary
Hungarian	Bosnia	1,400	1942	Hungarian-annexed Yugoslav Bačka
Hungarian	Croatia	?	1943	Hungary
Hungarian	Belgrade	30,000(?)	Summer 1942. Oct. 1943-4	Hungary
Hungarian	Bačka	?		Transdanubia, Hungary
Croat	Serbia proper; Yugoslav Bk	70,000		Croatia

Serbian	Croatia	120,000	1941-	Serbia
Croat	Lower Styria	6,000	1943 (Treaty of 11 Aug. 1943)	Croatia
Bulgarian	Romanian-held Ukraine	?	Nov.-Dec. 1943	Bulgaria
Bulgarian	Axis-occupied USSR Sea of Azov area	?	1944	Bulgaria
Romanian	Axis-occupied Soviet territory	?	1943	Transnistria
Romanian	Transnistria	?	1943	Romania
Czech & Slovak	USSR-inc. Carpa- tho-Ukraine	?	1945 (Treaty of 29 June 1945)	Czechoslovakia
Ukrainian & Russian	Czechoslovakia	?	1945 (Treaty of 29 June 1945)	USSR

APPENDIX II

Turkish Repatriation Policy (1933-40)

I

TURKEY differs markedly from all other Balkan countries in that she is relatively underpopulated. The country's total area is some 296,000 square miles, about as big as Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Hungary combined. According to the 1935 census, the population was 16,188,165, or 55 persons to the square mile. Asiatic Turkey was even more sparsely settled, with less than 50 persons to the square mile. This circumstance constituted a great handicap for the development of Turkish economy, especially in the industrial field, with many of the factories and mines unable to obtain sufficient labor.¹

Between 1921 and 1928, some 463,000 Turks entered Turkey from other countries.² In the 1923-33 decade, 628,305 persons (157,736 families) were repatriated, the majority of them from Greece under the terms of the Lausanne Convention of 30 January 1923, and the remainder from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Soviet Russia (particularly from the Crimea and the Caucasus), Syria, Persia, the Mediterranean islands, Afghanistan, and other areas.³ This voluntary immigration received much encouragement from the Turkish government, which, however, discriminated between true Turks, who had racial, linguistic, and cultural ties with Turkey, and those Moslems who, irrespective of race or speech, had always been admitted to the Ottoman Empire. Bosnians, Albanians, and Pomaks (Bulgarians of Moslem faith) with Turkish sympathies were often excluded if they did not speak Turkish.

The difficulties caused by underpopulation were in no way eased by this repatriation. They were, on the contrary, definitely aggravated by the fact that the immigrants were almost exclusively peasants and could neither numerically nor occupationally fill the gap in the economic structure left by the departure of 1.2 million urban Greeks between 1922 and 1926.⁴

The increasing flow of these immigrants, however, did induce the Turkish government to inaugurate a careful legislative program of resettlement. Under a law adopted on 14 June 1934,⁵ concerning the 'placement

¹ *La Turquie contemporaine*, pp. 300-301; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *South-eastern Europe*, p. 179.

² Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, pp. 710-11.

³ Statement made by the Turkish Minister of the Interior, Sukru Kaya Bey, to the Turkish National Assembly, on 12 November 1934. Quoted in *Ankara*, 17 November 1934.

⁴ Simpson, *The Refugees*, p. 18.

⁵ *Resmî Gazete*, 1934, pp. 4003 ff.

and life of populations becoming bound to Turkish culture,' there were to be admitted to the country individuals and migratory groups and nomad tribes of 'Turkish race (*soy* and *ırk*) affiliated with Turkish culture. Turkish 'race' referred to those persons whose mother tongue was Turkish and whose religion, at least nominally, was Islam, although several thousand Turkish-speaking Christians were admitted. Persons to be excluded were those not affiliated with Turkish culture, anarchists, spies, gypsies, and exiles migrating to Turkey.

According to the law (Article 7), immigrants of Turkish race who did not apply for government assistance were free to settle where they wished. Those aided by the government had to settle where directed. Those not of Turkish race, even if they sought no aid, were also required to settle where directed. Settlement assistance could not be granted to immigrants and refugees who did not wish to settle down within two years of coming to Turkey.

The problem of troublesome minorities among the immigrants was dealt with by the provision of the law (Article 11) which forbade those whose mother tongue was not Turkish to resettle together in a village or precinct, to organize a workers' or craft guild, or to form any group restricted to their own race. 'Necessary measures' were stipulated with regard to resettlers 'not bound to Turkish culture, or those who, although Turkish in culture, still speak another tongue, in order that military, political, social, and disciplinary ends may be attained.' These curbs included a ban on wholesale removals from place to place, and the silencing of minority nationalism.

The law also included extensive provision for the assistance to be rendered repatriates. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare had prepared a comprehensive program designed to ensure for the repatriates the following benefits: a permanent dwelling of at least two rooms, hall, toilet, and a stable, on a 1-dekar (.247 acre) plot; 15-20 dekars (3.7-5 acres) of land per person according to the quality of the soil; a guarantee of food, seed, and feed for the period of a year; the necessary minimum of working capital for artisans; supervision of the hygienic, agricultural, and economic conditions of each newly founded village, and establishment of a school in every village lacking one. The government outlay for each immigrant family was to be 600 to 750 Turkish pounds.

Such a program was in full accord with the general conception of the national problem held by the creators of the New Turkey. Turkey was in a position to treble its population without feeling the lack of land.⁶ At the same time, there were numerous Turkish minorities beyond her frontiers. The Turkish Minister of the Interior, Sukru Kaya Bey, estimated their number in the neighboring Balkan countries at more than two million.⁷ These were persons, according to his statement, 'who directly

⁶ Jäckh, *The Rising Crescent*, p. 167.

⁷ *Ankara*, 27 June 1934. According to Jäckh, there were at least one million Turkish-speaking people outside the Turkish republic and within the bounds of the former Ottoman Empire, mainly in the Balkans (op. cit. p. 171).

participated in the Turkish conquests of the last century, who installed themselves in the conquered regions and lived there for centuries as masters.⁸ This master status no longer existed. The Turks had become minorities in states ruled by the local Christian population, their former subjects. Not unlike other ethnic and religious minority groups, they had been exposed to varying degrees of persecution in the countries of their residence, especially in Bulgaria and Romania. Various deputies reported to the National Assembly on the injustices inflicted on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, and one representative even attacked the government, stating that 'having adopted the ideal of peace, it trespassed the limits of pacifism in not reacting to these injustices.'⁹

The Ankara government, however, was well aware of the historically established fact that intervention in favor of oppressed brethren abroad almost invariably leads to international complications and conflicts. As stated in July 1935 by a Turkish 'authorized personality' in an interview with a correspondent of the Turkish newspaper *Ulus*, 'the policy of the Turkish government toward Turkish minorities living outside Turkey's national frontiers was: *affection, but no intervention*. Turkey remembers too well the intervention of other powers in her own affairs.'¹⁰ The Ankara government adopted instead a policy of wholesale repatriation of the Turkish minorities scattered through the Balkan countries. Having diagnosed the cause of the 'Balkan curse' as a lack of ethnic homogeneity, it felt that the propitious moment for action had arrived.¹¹

At a session of the National Assembly on 13 November 1935, Minister Sukru Kaya Bey solemnly declared that repatriation was 'one of the bases of Turkey's demographic policy, and it is necessary that all Turks living abroad be installed in this country. It is also our duty not to deprive our brethren who reside beyond our frontiers of the benefits of the progress achieved by modern Turkey. Our country must hold its doors widely open for them.'¹²

A few months earlier, Sukru Kaya Bey had defined the longing of the Turkish minorities abroad to leave their countries of residence when he stated that 'the basic trend of the Turkish character is not to be able to live as slave where the Turk previously was the master.' This comment could, of course, refer only to the Turks in Balkan countries, which had for centuries been under Turkish domination. He also stated that from 20 million to 30 million persons of Turkish ethnic origin residing in 'other countries of the world do not enter into the frame of the problem dealt with.'¹³

⁸ *Ankara*, 17 November 1934.

⁹ *Ibid.* 28 November 1935 and 27 January 1938.

¹⁰ Quoted in *Ankara*, 20 July 1935.

¹¹ Lengyel, *Turkey*, pp. 386-7.

¹² *Ankara*, 28 November 1935.

¹³ *Ibid.* 17 November 1934.

II

The first attempt to handle the repatriation problem in a strictly organized way and on the basis of an interstate treaty was made in connection with the Turkish minority in Romania. Data published on the number of Turks in that country put the figure anywhere between 300,000 and 400,000. The largest and most compact group of Turks was to be found in Dobruja, where they numbered some 225,000. Their plight was deplorable, both politically and economically. The Romanian agrarian reform of 1924 had resulted in confiscation of about a third of the land owned by the Dobruja Turks.¹⁴ Naturally, therefore, they were receptive to the Ankara repatriation appeals.

Of their own accord and at their own risk, 16,072 Turks left Romania for Turkey in 1934. In the following year, 21,162 departed, and 20,692 in 1936.¹⁵ The Ankara government tried to regularize this spontaneous migration and to secure for the repatriates certain emigration facilities, as well as the right to sell their real property and to take with them their movable goods. Toward these ends certain preliminary verbal agreements were concluded with the Romanian government. As early as 20 July 1935, *Ankara* reported that Turks leaving Romania were exempt from all passport formalities and customs duties, as well as the obligation to pay up tax arrears before their departure. Young people in military service were released without delay to enable them to join their emigrating parents. In 1936, *Ankara* reported that the 11,937 repatriates from Romania, who had arrived between April and August of that year, brought with them 814 horses, 863 oxen, 921 buffaloes, 4,569 sheep, 1,316 carriages, and 839,985 kilograms (1,851,327 pounds) of personal belongings.¹⁶

The way was thus paved for a formal interstate agreement on the repatriation movement from Romania. Experience gathered during the preceding years was systematized and incorporated in the Turkish-Romanian convention on the Dobruja Turks, concluded on 4 September 1936 and put into effect on 1 April of the following year. The accord provided for the wholesale but voluntary emigration of the Dobruja Turks within the next five years.

Under the terms of the agreement, emigration quotas for each year were to be determined in advance. The emigrants were permitted to sell freely their urban real estate and houses. Rural real estate could be taken over by the Romanian government at a fixed price of \$24.20 per acre including the buildings. The corresponding amounts were to be paid not to the individual emigrants but to the account of the Turkish government in the Romanian National Bank within seven years. The Turkish government undertook to use these credits for the acquisition of Romanian goods (wood, cattle, oil), the export of which was declared free of customs

¹⁴ T. von Stamati, 'Umsiedlungen auf dem Balkan und in Kleinasien,' in *Nation und Staat*, June 1940, p. 301.

¹⁵ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

¹⁶ *Ankara*, 19 November 1936.

duties. The same procedure was applied to the amounts realized by the individual emigrants from the sale of their urban property. The emigrants were also allowed to buy any Romanian goods on their own account and to export them to Turkey duty-free. Movable property could be taken along without any restrictions. A special mixed commission, consisting of four Romanian officials and two delegates chosen by the prospective emigrants, was entrusted with the examination of the applications for emigration and with fixing the amounts to be paid by the Romanian government for the property left behind and taken over by the government.¹⁷ Some 247,100 acres of land belonging to 35,000 Turkish families became available for purchase by the Romanian government under the terms of the 1936 agreement.¹⁸

In the course of the next two years the number of repatriates from Romania decreased considerably, in accordance with the intention of the Ankara government to retard and to canalize the repatriation process. In 1937, 13,110 Romanian Turks entered Turkey, and in 1938, 8,832 were repatriated.¹⁹ The quota for 1939 was set at 3,400, and transport was to begin in September from the Romanian port of Constantza.²⁰ Information on whether the outbreak of the war prevented the actual repatriation of this group has not been published. There are indications that in 1940 the Romanian and Turkish governments were planning an agreement on the repatriation from Bessarabia of the 100,000 so-called Gavagus Turks of orthodox faith.²¹ The repatriated Dobruja Turks were resettled mainly in the depopulated eastern Thrace districts of Corlu, Evros, Tekirdag, Canak Kale, Eurenkoy, Gelibolu, Saray, Malgara, Resau, and Kirkclareli, as well as in the districts of Konya, Takat-Yorgad, Nigde, Kayseri, and Bilecik.²²

III

In 1936 Minister Sukru Kaya Bey estimated the number of Turks in Bulgaria at 'about 1 million,'²³ surely a greatly exaggerated figure. Their actual number was closer to 648,000. The Turks in Bulgaria lived in close settlements, mainly in the northeastern part of the country, in the districts of Sumen, Stara Zagora, Burgas, and in Dobruja. The proportion of Turks in some of these districts was as high as 90 per cent. In no way had they become assimilated with the Bulgarians. A Moslem publication described their social and intellectual position as inferior to that of the Bulgarians, and reported that, in consequence, the advanced elements among the Turks

¹⁷ Stamati, 'Umsiedlung . . .' (cited above), p. 301.

¹⁸ Peter Schischkoff and Heinz Wilsdorf, 'Die zwischenstaatliche Lenkung der Türkenwanderung,' in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, September 1938, p. 762.

¹⁹ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

²⁰ *Ankara*, 27 July 1939.

²¹ Stamati, 'Umsiedlung . . .' (cited above), p. 301.

²² Schischkoff and Wilsdorf, op. cit. p. 762; *Ankara*, 19 November 1936.

²³ *Ankara*, 17 November 1934.

looked to Ankara for guidance.²⁴ The Bulgarian government for its part recognized this minority with its potential irredentism as a serious menace to the state and was therefore eager to eliminate it as quickly as possible.

It was the intention of the Kemalist government, however, to encourage a methodical return movement only, and to spread it over a period of years. The government explained this attitude by its desire not to overtax Turkey's absorptive capacity, financial and otherwise, by a sudden mass influx of immigrants.

Before 1934 the number of Turkish emigrants from Bulgaria was unimpressive: 2,141 in 1931, 1,452 in 1932, and 1,382 in 1933.²⁵ Then the picture changed radically. In November 1934, Minister Sukru Kaya Bey stated cautiously: 'During the summer months an emigration movement manifested itself in Bulgaria and grew to the proportions of a mass emigration.' In reply to remonstrances from the Turkish government, Bulgaria confessed that this movement was the result of 'local pressure.' Minister Sukru Kaya Bey assured the Turkish National Assembly that diplomatic steps taken by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had halted the emigration,²⁶ but 8,682 Turks left Bulgaria under administrative pressure in 1934, and during the next year, the number of emigrants reached a new high mark of 24,968.²⁷

This virtually enforced and unorganized movement of Turks from Bulgaria placed the Ankara government in an extremely difficult position. Further diplomatic protests against the persecution of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were obviously futile, and would only lead to a worsening of the already strained relations between the two countries. But at the same time, the Kemalist government could not continue to allow this chaotic influx of Turks who entered the country not as repatriates but as refugees who had abandoned their farms without any compensation and, in many cases, had left behind even their movable property and their funds. Their arrival threatened to upset the whole carefully prepared resettlement scheme.

In an attempt to cope with the situation, the Turkish government concluded preliminary agreements with Bulgaria in 1936 and 1937, providing for the repatriation of some 10,000 Turks each year. Shortly thereafter, however, the Bulgarian government, impatient to accelerate the emigration, took occasion to dispatch 1,500 Turks to Turkey as 'tourists.' The resettlement of these 'tourists' was finally permitted, but Bulgaria was obliged to deduct an equal number from the quota for the next year.²⁸

As it worked out, only during the first year (1936) was the agreement even a partial success. In this year not more than 11,730 Turks left Bulgaria, but in 1937 the number of emigrants reached 13,490. The next year's calculations were completely knocked out when 20,542 Turks were forced

²⁴ G. H. Bousquet, 'Islam in the Balkans,' in *Moslem World*, January 1937, pp. 67-8.

²⁵ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

²⁶ *Ankara*, 17 November 1934.

²⁷ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

²⁸ Schischkoff and Wilsdorf, op. cit. p. 763.

to move from Bulgaria to Turkey.²⁹ The quota for 1939 was 11,290, but 15,438 Turks left Bulgaria during that year. More than 89 per cent of them depended for their living on agriculture, forestry, or fishing.³⁰

The Turkish repatriates from Bulgaria were not colonized in closed settlements in the frontier area, as was the case with the Dobruja Turks. They were established mainly in Anatolia, in the districts of Izmir, Manisa, Aydın, Diyarbakir, Nigde, and Sivas.³¹

IV

According to the 1931 census, there were more than 1.5 million Moslems in Yugoslavia. The great majority of them, however, were not Turks, but Bosnians or Serbs of Moslem faith, Arnauts, Pomaks, and Albanians. The number of 'genuine' Turks, many of whom had settled in the southern districts of modern Yugoslavia even before the Turkish conquest of the Balkans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was estimated at from 300,000 to 800,000. The latter figure, given by Minister Sukru Kaya Bey in 1934, was undoubtedly an exaggeration.³² According to a Moslem author, this group was 'still in a primitive state of cultural and economic development.'³³

Between 1931 and 1938, some 11,335 Turks left Yugoslavia for Turkey, the annual exodus ranging from 3,489 in 1935 to 65 in 1937.³⁴ In July 1938 the Turkish and Yugoslav governments concluded an agreement providing for the repatriation of 150,000 Yugoslav Turks in the course of the next six years. There is no information on the outcome of this plan. It may be assumed that this accord followed the same general pattern as the Turkish-Romanian convention of 1936.

V

The five-year plan devised by the Turkish government envisioned the resettlement of 90,000 repatriates in 1935 and another 173,000 in each of the next four years, making a total of 782,000. At least 650,000 were to be resettled in Thrace.³⁵ This ambitious program never materialized. Between 1935 and 1938, only 140,107 repatriates arrived in Turkey.³⁶ And for 1939, the last year of the period, the quota was only 14,690.³⁷

²⁹ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

³⁰ *Ankara*, 27 July 1939; *Annuaire Statistique du Royaume de Bulgarie*, 1940, p. 136.

³¹ Schischkoff and Wilsdorf, op. cit. p. 763.

³² *Ankara*, 17 November 1939.

³³ Smail-Aga Cemalovic, 'Die Moslems in Königreich Jugoslawien,' in *Moslemische Revue*, April 1935.

³⁴ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

³⁵ *Ankara*, 13 July 1935.

³⁶ *Istatistik Yilligi*, 1937-8, x, 89.

³⁷ *Ankara*, 27 July 1939.

The reason for this drastic contraction of the original scheme cannot be found in any lack of Turks in neighboring countries who were willing to migrate to the Turkish motherland. All available information indicates that many tens of thousands of Turks in Bulgaria and Romania were anxious to leave their country of residence for the New Turkey. Representative Hakki Uzman reported to the National Assembly that 'Bulgarian Turks would be glad to dispose of their property no matter under what conditions; thousands of families having sold all they possess have since spent their entire fortune and are reduced to extreme destitution waiting for the chance to emigrate.'³⁸

The government was repeatedly subjected to pressure of both public opinion and parliamentary groups to speed the rate of immigration and to transfer all those who were ready and waiting. But the Kemalist administration was determined to avoid foreign loans and insisted on carrying out the resettlement of the repatriates within the limits of Turkey's own financial resources. The Minister of Hygiene and Social Welfare, Hulusi Alatas, in charge of all settlement activities, advised the National Assembly in January 1938 that the resettlement scheme had to be conducted 'in accordance with the budget of the state. . . Unless the problem of the Turkish immigrants,' he added, 'is envisioned and dealt with in relation to our limited scope, it will present the same dangers and will lead to the same unfortunate results as those we have met in the past; we must therefore, before undertaking any action, make all the calculations and preparations necessary for the realization of the scheduled program.'³⁹

The repatriates were colonized on land left by the Greek emigrants and on crown land. But even in 1934, the government was seriously worried over the land settlement prospect of finding enough immediately usable land. In November of that year Minister Sukru Kaya Bey reported that very little more crown land was available. It was decided to put at the disposal of the resettlers a part of the pasture land, but this was also considered insufficient, and the government contemplated the expropriation of privately owned fallow land.⁴⁰ In January 1938 Minister Hulusi Alatas stated that all the repatriates who had arrived before 1937 and two-thirds of those who came that year had been allotted land. The repatriates were also given 17,016 houses, 9,542 oxen, 16,444 plows, and other essentials.⁴¹

According to all indications, the resettlement project was a success. Minister Sukru Kaya Bey reported to the National Assembly on 13 November 1935 in these glowing terms: 'Turkey has successfully accomplished a task which no government in history has ever succeeded in achieving so perfectly. Refugees who arrived last year from Romania and Bulgaria immediately became productive elements and they have helped us to the best of their ability in the national production. There is now not one of them without shelter or food.'⁴² According to a more recent judgment by so neutral and well-informed an observer as Donald Everest Webster, the repatriates 'have the vigor and ambition generally characteristic of

³⁸ Ibid. 27 January 1938.

⁴¹ Ibid. 27 January 1938.

³⁹ Ibid. 27 January 1938.

⁴² Ibid. 28 November 1935.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 17 November 1934.

migrants, so they are making a genuine contribution to the country to which they thus show their affection. While the government is being strained to care for them, there is every reason to believe that the investment is sound. Most of the immigrants move into new villages situated in the regions of fair to good fertility. Since their villages are newly built and much of their farm equipment is equally new, many of the settlements are practically model villages.⁴³

Since 1939, the progress of the repatriation scheme has been very much impeded by the abnormal international situation, the war, and the earthquake in Anatolia. An Istanbul dispatch to the *Krakauer Zeitung*, dated 7 July 1940, stated that the Turkish government had decided not to conduct any repatriation activities in 1940. There are, however, indications to the contrary. Between 1935 and 1940, 172,000 Turkish immigrants entered Turkey. The number of repatriates for the 1935-8 period was 140,017, leaving some 32,000 for 1939 and 1940. Since 18,858 arrived in 1939 (15,458 from Bulgaria and 3,400 from Romania),⁴⁴ more than 13,000 must have arrived in 1940. This group may have been recruited largely from the remnant of the Turkish minority in Greek Macedonia and eastern Thrace, whose repatriation was begun under the terms of a friendly arrangement between Greece and Turkey in May 1940.⁴⁵ In reply to an inquiry, the Turkish Embassy in Washington informed the author of this study on 21 March 1944 that they had no up-to-date material on the repatriation of Turkish minorities in recent years.

The Turkish census of October 1940 put the population at 17,869,901, an increase of 10.4 per cent over the figure given by the 1935 census.⁴⁶ Well-informed quarters attributed the increase 'largely to systematic and efficient repatriation,' stressing that 'Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Greece, and Yugoslavia are being steadily denuded of Turkish sons.' The latest official estimate is that more than 900,000 Turks still remain in the neighboring Balkan states.⁴⁷

⁴³ Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk*, p. 274.

⁴⁴ *Ankara*, 27 July 1939.

⁴⁵ M. E. P., 'Greece and the War,' in *Bulletin of International News*, 5 February 1944, pp. 91, 94.

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, 7 January 1941.

⁴⁷ *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 July 1939.

APPENDIX III

The Option Clause in the Reich Transfer Treaties

I

THE majority of the transfer treaties concluded and carried out in the period between 1920 and 1944 provided for the right of option by the populations concerned. In this respect, the most interesting were the five agreements on transfer of German minorities from the Soviet sphere of influence, concluded by the Reich in 1939-41. The option clause on which they were based was quite unusual in character.

Only two of these five agreements were published in full, thereby permitting close and thorough study of their provisions—those made with Estonia and Latvia, dated 15 and 30 October 1939, respectively. In so far as their form is concerned, these agreements are typical treaties of option for the benefit of the citizens of German ethnic nationality in these two Baltic states. Each of these citizens was granted the right of option, and it was up to him, and him alone, whether he chose to remain where he was or to leave for the German fatherland. He had merely been informed that the Führer of the German Reich had invited him to settle in the Reich and that the government of his country of residence was willing to permit his departure under certain conditions. He was in no way obliged to exercise the right of option. Nor was he faced with the dilemma of opting for or against evacuation. He could simply refrain from voting, and his silence would be interpreted as a decision to abide by his present civil status. Were he, however, to exercise his right of option, there was but one choice open to him, that is, to opt in favor of the Reich.

The German-Estonian protocol clearly defined what persons were eligible for release from Estonian citizenship under the terms of the agreement with the Reich (Article 1: 1a-c). All persons listed in the national register (*cadastre*) of the cultural autonomy of the German minority were included in this category (Article 1: 1a).¹ The register was an absolute criterion, and no objections could be raised where it was concerned. Persons not on the German national register, however, could be recognized as Germans by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, which had been authorized to grant certificates of German ethnic nationality to those it deemed eligible (Article 1: 1b). No rules were set to guide the Ministry in issuing or refusing these certificates. The fact that such a subjective and individual matter as the nationality of potential optants was entrusted to the Estonian Ministry of Interior, rather than to one of the governing

¹ *Die Nationalitäten in den Staaten Europas*, p. 8.

bodies of the German cultural autonomy or to the legation of the Reich in Estonia, is somewhat surprising. It is especially so in view of the fact that the Estonian Constitution of 1920 (Article 20) stated specifically that 'every citizen is free to determine his own [ethnic] nationality.' The group affected by this clause was by no means a small one. According to the 1934 census, there were 16,346 Germans in Estonia. The German national register listed only 13,343 members in 1936.² The Estonian Ministry of the Interior thus became the sole judge of the status of some 3,000 persons, for the protocol made no provision for appeal. The wives, children, and parents of the persons on the register or certified by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior were automatically granted the right to opt and, eventually, to depart from the country of their residence.

The German-Estonian protocol, far less specific than the later treaty concluded between the Reich and Latvia, did not state in so many words that only those persons might be released from Estonian citizenship who had freely expressed their decision to abandon forever their local citizenship and to leave their present residence, but this condition was implicit. Persons over 18 years of age were to submit their applications for release personally. Parents or tutors were to decide for younger persons. If only one of the parents opted for departure, the children could accompany him (or her) only if the other parent agreed (Article 1: 1c). Tutors or superintendents of institutions were to opt for the feeble-minded and the insane. Persons in active military service were permitted to present their applications to the military authorities (Article 1: 4). Inmates of penitentiaries were to send their applications to the Ministry of the Interior (Article 1: 5).

All these individual applications were incorporated in one single collective application (Article 1: 2). This included those Germans who were being supported by the state, by municipalities, or by private persons, as well as Germans in hospitals or in prisons (Article 1: 8). The legation of the Reich in Estonia indicated on the collective application that persons included would be accepted as citizens of the Reich (Article 1: 7).

Immediately following the request to depart from Estonia, the applicant was deprived of his Estonian identity papers and of his passport for foreign travel. In place of these, he was given a special certificate bearing the seal of the Ministry of the Interior and valid only for departure from Estonia on one of the German resettlement ships (Article 1: 6). Persons already in possession of departure certificates could not change their minds (Article 1: 6). Although, unlike the German-Latvian treaty, the protocol did not set the departure deadline, it was clear that immediate evacuation was expected. In exceptional cases a three-month delay was granted for the settlement of business affairs (Article 1: 8).

According to the German-Latvian treaty, only Latvian citizens of German ethnic nationality qualified for release from Latvian citizenship. The question of defining the German ethnic nationality was therefore of

² Werner Giere, 'Bestandsaufnahme des Estländischen Deutschtums,' in *Deutsche Arbeit*, January 1937, p. 17.

primary importance. In Latvia the institution of national registers did not exist; thus each individual German was responsible for proving his German nationality. A protocol added to the treaty stipulated that Latvian government bodies would consider as sufficient proof of German ethnic nationality a 'recognized certificate,' or, in the absence or inadequacy of such a document, 'a permit for resettlement delivered by the German Legation' (Article 1: a, b). This permit was first mentioned in the treaty with the note that 'another recognized certificate' could also be admitted as proof. Logically, it would seem that the absence of a permit for resettlement in the Reich obtained from the German Legation would preclude any possibility of opting for transfer. But since the protocol made acceptable any document considered valid by the Latvian authorities, it must be assumed that persons in possession of necessary documents were entitled to apply directly to Latvian authorities, without prior recourse to the German Legation. Only in cases where the Latvian authorities refused to recognize the validity of the documents produced by the applicant did the latter have to apply directly to the legation.

If one can judge from the text of the protocol, the permit of the German Legation was deemed incontestable proof of German ethnic nationality. All other documents could be accepted or refused at the discretion of the Latvian authorities. In exceptional cases, however, the protocol (Article 2) provided that the Latvian authorities were 'to prove and to establish' the Lettish ethnic nationality of the applicant, should they reject his documents. As a rule, all controversial cases were to be decided by agreement between the Latvian government and the German Legation. The Latvian government could not use the Lettish nationality of a husband or a wife as an excuse for refusing to release the family from Latvian citizenship, should one of the parents be of German nationality (Article 2: 2).

It is noteworthy that the Latvian authorities could refuse the recognition of German ethnic nationality only to applicants of Lettish ethnic nationality, or to those considered such by the Latvian authorities. This meant that, if the Latvian authorities judged that an applicant was neither of German nor of Lettish ethnic nationality, they could not refuse to release him from Latvian citizenship. Such, for example, would have been the case of a person of Estonian or Russian ethnic nationality pretending to be of German nationality and in possession of a resettlement permit from the German Legation. The two contracting parties apparently believed that if the applicant were not of Lettish ethnic nationality, the Latvian authorities would not be interested in a careful investigation as to his true ethnic origin. If a non-Lett claimed to be of German nationality, and if the German Legation was prepared to recognize him as such and to admit him to the Reich as a resettler, the Latvian authorities would be glad to be rid of him. This attitude of the Latvian authorities explains why a considerable number of Russians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and 'stateless' persons were able to leave Latvia with the German evacuees on the basis of German Legation permits.

Persons over 16 years of age had to apply for permits in person. A husband and wife voted individually and the decision of one was not binding on the other. A legal representative (father, mother, guardian) could decide

for children under 16 and for legally incapacitated persons. Parents and guardians could elect a citizenship different from their own for their children and pupils. Thus a legal representative could opt in favor of resettlement on behalf of the persons he represented and remain a Latvian citizen himself; this probably worked inversely as well, so that the fact that a legal representative opted for evacuation would not necessarily affect the Latvian citizenship of his children or pupils. In contrast to the German-Estonian protocol (Article 1: 3), the Latvian-German treaty did not contain a provision whereby children under 18 automatically lost the citizenship forfeited by their parents. Men in the armed forces, and state and municipal employees, as well as clergy of German ethnic nationality, were liberated from their contractual obligations on request. Finally, all applications for release from Latvian citizenship were considered as final and irrevocable.

The Latvian Government assumed the obligation to release from Latvian citizenship all those persons whose German ethnic nationality had been established and who had applied for said release before 15 December 1939. This obligation had a sweeping character, and although the treaty did not provide for a collective application, as did the German-Estonian protocol, it deprived the Latvian government of the right to refuse release from Latvian citizenship to all those who satisfied the conditions laid down in the protocol (Article 1). For its part, the government of the Reich assumed the obligation to grant Reich citizenship to all those who, by virtue of the treaty, lost their Latvian citizenship and left Latvia for Germany. The Reich's responsibility for an applicant began just as soon as his German nationality was established under the terms of the protocol and he had received the certificate of release, which also served as a permit for departure. In no circumstances could the Reich legally refuse him citizenship, even if his German ethnic nationality had been established by the Latvian authorities on grounds of documents other than a permit from the German Legation.³

All persons who had been released from Latvian citizenship were required to leave Latvia before 15 December 1939. The only exception made by the protocol (Article 4) from the departure deadline was for persons whose presence was indispensable to the management of industrial or commercial enterprises, or for other similar reasons. Each individual deferment required the joint approval of the Latvian government and the German Legation.

The obligations assumed by the two contracting parties, under the terms of the treaty, were entirely different. The Latvian government merely undertook 'not to hinder the resettlers' (an obligation of a purely negative character) and 'to help their departure' (a positive obligation of a very general and vague character). The obligations of the Reich were,

³ As a matter of fact, upon their arrival in the Reich, German repatriates were compelled to go through a four-hour naturalization procedure before being accepted as citizens. According to the Berlin correspondent of the *New York Times* (27 November 1939) the evacuees were not infrequently refused German citizenship, and had to apply through the regular channels.

however, of a quite concrete and practical nature: to ensure the material possibility of departure and to be responsible for all expenses connected with the departure in so far as they were not to be borne by the resettlers themselves (Article 4).

II

The peculiarity of the option clauses in the agreements concluded by the Reich and the Baltic states lay not so much in the legal nature of these treaties as in the political situation that brought them about. In the past three centuries, all recorded cases of granting the right of option to members of an ethnic or religious group were connected with changes in sovereignty resulting from the cession or exchange of territories. When a territory was turned over by one state to another, it appeared natural that all those who could not, or would not, accept this change should be given the right to opt in favor of their home state, and to leave the state whose citizens they were not willing to become. This right was usually stipulated for them by the state to which they owed allegiance prior to the cession of territory.

The agreements concluded by the Reich with Estonia and Latvia in October 1939, however, were in no way connected with territorial changes. The Latvian and Estonian citizens of German ethnic nationality could hardly be called former citizens of the Reich. Indeed, by these treaties the right of option was granted to Estonian and Latvian citizens whose forefathers had lived in the Baltic areas for over 700 years, and who themselves had lived for over 20 years within the framework of Estonian and Latvian statehood. Thus there existed no legal ground entitling the Reich to act in the so-called interests of the Baltic Germans. There had been no war between the states, no treaty of peace had been concluded, and all territorial frontiers remained the same.

These agreements between the Reich and Estonia and Latvia are therefore in a category by themselves, differing not only from the treaties of option concluded prior to 1939, with one exception, but also from all later transfer treaties signed by the Reich and involving the right of option. These treaties were invariably connected with territorial changes. The three transfer treaties concluded with the Soviet Union (3 November 1939, 5 September 1940, and 10 January 1941) were sequels to the partition of Poland, the incorporation into the Soviet Union of former Rumanian Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and the incorporation into the Soviet Union of the Baltic states. The agreement between the Reich and Romania, which dealt with the evacuation of Germans from Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobruja, was linked to the cession of Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union and the annexation of Southern Dobruja by Bulgaria. The treaties with Italy and Croatia dealing with the transfer of Germans from the former Yugoslav provinces of Ljubljana and Bosnia had their origin in the dismemberment of Yugoslavia.

The single exception cited above was the treaty between the Reich and Italy concerning the Germans of the South Tyrol. In this connection, it must be taken into account that Italy, not the Reich, took the initiative in

demanding the evacuation. The right of transfer was granted not in the interests of the prospective optants, but for the benefit of the country of their residence which desired to be rid of them. No such negative stimulus existed in either Estonia or Latvia and the question of the transfer was raised on the initiative of the Reich (or of the Soviet Union), not by the home states of the *Volksdeutsche*.

Reich policy with regard to the Baltic Germans was similar to the Turkish repatriation policy of 1933-40, which was independent of any changes in national sovereignty. The motives of the Turkish government paralleled those officially acknowledged by the government of the Reich in the preamble to its treaty with Latvia: the intention to group together all persons of German (Turkish) nationality within the borders of the Reich (Turkey).

The basic peculiarity of the German-Latvian treaty was embodied in the preamble, which stated that the contracting countries agree that 'this resettlement be executed as a single move as a result of which the German folk group will withdraw from the framework of the Latvian state.' By this clause, what would ordinarily have been a commonplace case of option, with precedents dating back to the seventeenth century, was turned into an unprecedented political move. Hitherto, no matter how large a number of persons in a given country and within a stipulated period of time chose to exercise a right of option in favor of another country, the status of those members of the same ethnic group who elected to remain in their homeland was unaffected.

The Reich, regarding itself as the natural protector of the rights of Germans wherever they might live, openly disregarded this traditional rule. The far-reaching formula agreed upon by the Reich and Latvia, permitting the Reich to carry out the almost immediate total evacuation of Germans residing in Latvia and to proclaim, on behalf of the German people throughout the world, that there were no more Germans in the Latvian state who might lay claim to any national rights, was in full accordance with the aims and wishes of the two contracting parties. The Reich considered all Germans who did not respond to a call by the Führer as 'bad Germans,' deserving neither protection nor the privilege of claiming any collective rights as a German minority. At the same time, the elimination of its powerful and ambitious German folk group as an entity was of tremendous importance for the Latvian government, greatly simplifying a number of internal political, national, and social-economic problems confronting the young state.

III

The German-Soviet treaty of 3 November 1939 stipulated that persons of German ethnic nationality residing in the part of Poland incorporated into the Soviet Union, and persons of White Russian or Ukrainian nationality residing in the part of Poland incorporated into the Reich, or in territories forming the German sphere of influence, were permitted to opt for German or Soviet citizenship respectively and, accordingly, to leave

the territory of their actual residence. Thus the treaty provided for an exchange of populations.

The text of the treaty was never made public by either of the contracting parties, but a detailed communique from Moscow on 4 November outlined its general character and main provisions.⁴ The communique placed special emphasis on the voluntary nature of the prospective resettlement. The two contracting parties agreed that a free expression of will by each individual was to be the decisive factor for evacuation, and that there would be neither direct nor indirect pressure. As far as can be judged from both German and Soviet sources—all subject to strict censorship—no pressure was applied to the optants. Children under 14 years of age were to share the fate of the head of the family.⁵

Both the German-Estonian and German-Latvian treaties contained detailed option provisions for families divided in their expression of will. There is no reason to believe that the Soviet-German treaty of option provided so carefully for individual cases. The *Volksdeutsche* involved were a radically different group from the Baltic Germans. Mixed marriages between Germans, Estonians, Letts, and Russians, and also Jews though to a much lesser degree, were not infrequent in the Baltic states, and many a family faced the tragic prospect of separation. In these circumstances, the procedure of option had to be individualized. Among Wolhynian and Galician Germans, however, mixed marriages were very infrequent, and there was no reason to expect disagreements between husbands and wives on grounds of nationality. A strict patriarchal way of living predominated in the peasant families and the will of the head of the family was as sacred as law.

There is no indication of the standards used to decide whether a person was entitled to opt either for German or for Soviet citizenship. In the first case, this right was granted to persons of German ethnic nationality; in the second, it was granted to Ukrainians, White Russians, and Russians. Since there was no national registration in Poland, there could be no unquestionable proof of membership in a given national group. The communique made no mention of any authority, either German or Soviet, that had power to certify the ethnic nationality of the persons involved. It is believed that the joint evacuation machinery, set up in accordance with the treaty, had the deciding word in the matter of option procedure.

It was unavoidable that disagreements should arise between the Reich representatives and those of the Soviet government, and that these differences should bear chiefly upon the question of nationality and on the right of certain persons or groups of persons to opt and to depart. The communique of 4 November did not mention how these differences were to be settled. But apparently the Soviet representatives were instructed to place as few obstacles as possible in the path of those desirous of departing. The Soviet government obviously looked upon the German settlers in the newly acquired former Polish regions as persons who 'owed allegiance'

⁴ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5 November 1939.

⁵ *Der Treck der Volksdeutschen aus Wolhynien, Galizien und dem Narew Gebiet*, p. 21.

to the Reich and were therefore merely being 'restored' to German jurisdiction. It did not regard them as newly acquired Soviet citizens who had opted⁹ for another state. Had this been the case, a thorough investigation of their rights of option would have been necessary. The Germans were, on the contrary, treated in this instance as an alien element whose repatriation was a matter of course and whose departure would be welcomed. If some of them preferred residence in the Soviet Union to repatriation, the opportunity was to be left open to them, but as an exception rather than the rule.

The optional basis of the 3 November treaty is one of its most essential features. But, if one seeks a prototype in the historic development of the option clause, it will be found only in the ancient and primitive patterns of option, which in fact stood merely for freedom of emigration. The so-called option was only the legal alternative, given to each inhabitant of a region which had changed sovereignty, of accepting the new allegiance and all it implied, or of emigrating. In the latter case the option clause merely insured the right of unhindered departure and gave certain guarantees with regard to property interests connected with this departure. In order that such emigration could take place it was essential that the country of allegiance be prepared to recognize the optant as its citizen and admit him to its territory. The juridical aspects of option thus played a subsidiary role, having only the simple aim of enabling given persons to emigrate and of giving this emigration a legal form.

The distinctive feature of the 3 November treaty, however, lies in the peculiar and unprecedented operation of the option, rather than in the optional basis as such. Previous cases of option generally occurred when territory was transferred from State A to State B. The citizens of State A residing in the ceded territory had the right to opt in favor of the home state and to settle there. A similar right might eventually be granted to citizens of State B who happened to reside in State A. Thus only two factors were involved: States A and B.

The situation is much more involved in the case under discussion. State A (Poland), the former sovereign of the territories subject to the treaty of 3 November, ceased to exist from the point of view of State B (Soviet Union) and State C (the Reich), the heirs to these territories. States B and C, therefore, concluded a treaty based on the principle of optional exchange of populations. As a result, instead of the normal A-B combination, we have a triangle, A-B-C, with B and C emerging as the only active factors.

Still another peculiarity should not be overlooked. According to the treaty, not all former Polish citizens of the territories acquired by the Soviet Union were given the right to opt in favor of the Reich, but only former Polish citizens of German ethnic nationality. And, inversely, only former Polish citizens of Ukrainian, White Russian, or Russian nationality, who resided in the regions incorporated into the Reich, or which were under its domination (Government General), were given the right to opt in favor of the Soviet Union. In a sense, this was an acceptance of the National Socialist conception of *Schutzrecht* or the 'protective right of the mother state' over its folk groups scattered throughout the various

countries of the world. Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven, member of the Reichstag, stressed that this 'protective right of the mother state' was to be considered 'the legal basis for the resettlement treaties, which Germany first concluded.'⁶ According to this conception, all *Volksdeutsche* in the entire world, whatever their citizenship, were regarded as possible future citizens of the Reich, whatever their former or present status. The treaty of 3 November was in fact based on the concept of an ideal super-state racial citizenship rather than on the traditional state-citizenship. It implied that whenever the sovereignty of a territory was modified, persons of German origin residing in that territory could opt in favor of the Reich as the only alternative to acceptance of the new sovereignty.

It is not to be inferred that the government of the Soviet Union, in concluding the treaty with the Reich, deliberately accepted this point of view and in so doing made it the cornerstone of a new international legal concept. Far from it. This conception is in fundamental contradiction not only to the ideology of the Soviet Union but also to its practice in the past. However, the treaties governing the evacuation of the Germans from territories that had passed into the sphere of influence or under the sovereignty of the Soviet Union, like all other treaties concluded with the Reich prior to 21 June 1941, were dictated exclusively by expediency. In concluding them, the Soviet government obviously did not take into account the principle which they represented, nor the possible interpretations to which they would be subject. Its interest at this time was to rid the newly acquired territories of embarrassing German minorities which could become a source of undesirable conflict with the Reich. Nevertheless, neither the unusual juridical construction of these treaties nor the peculiar political and legal consequences to which they have given rise can be brushed aside. The treaty, based on a principle of reciprocity, automatically applied the principle of 'racial citizenship' to those Ukrainians and White Russians who resided in the former Polish territories annexed by the Reich, thus, to a certain extent, making the principle a part of Soviet Union policy.

IV

The German-Soviet agreement of 5 September 1940, concerning the transfer of Germans from Soviet-incorporated Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, was in its underlying principles analogous to the earlier agreement of 3 November 1939. In this case, however, the application of the option principle was even more peculiar than in earlier treaties. The triangle formation, with Poland (State A), Soviet Russia (State B), and the Reich (State C) as the participants, here took another and quite paradoxical twist. Romania (State A) was compelled to cede to the Soviet Union (State B) the territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. It would seem that a classical opportunity for the option provision was thus created. But the option provision was not included in the agreement signed between States A and B concerning the cession of these territories.

⁶ Freytag-Loringhoven, Baron von, 'Politik und Recht,' in *Europäische Revue*, January 1941, pp. 7-8.

Former Romanian citizens of these territories did not receive the right to opt in favor of Romanian citizenship. Only the small fraction of the Romanian citizens of these territories who were of German origin received the right to opt. Even this was not the result of an agreement between the only two logical partners, A (Romania) and B (Soviet Union), but of an agreement between B (Soviet Union), and State C (Germany), which appeared on the scene as a *deus ex machina*. State A was completely ignored.

The German-Soviet agreement of 5 September offered only one choice. Former Romanian citizens of German origin living in the territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina could either refrain from voting, in which case they automatically became citizens of the Soviet Union; or they could opt for the Reich, in which case they were to be transferred to Germany. The obvious possibility that former Romanian citizens might desire to keep their Romanian citizenship and opt for repatriation to Romania was overlooked entirely. All international practice points to the inclusion of this opportunity as the natural alternative. Romania had not ceased to exist as a state, as had Poland in the opinion of its conquerors. To deprive her former citizens of the right to opt for their Romanian citizenship was a radical innovation.

It is possible that the Romanian government by tacit consent showed little interest in this question. If so, the alternative of opting in favor of Romania could not in any case have been offered, as the premise of every option in favor of a definite state is the willingness of said state to accept as citizens those who opt in its favor. Not that this situation would in any way justify an agreement with the Reich for option in favor of German citizenship. Neither Bessarabia nor Northern Bukovina had ever been under German sovereignty. Germans living in these territories had not been citizens of Germany for at least four generations. There existed no territorial or legal criteria whatever that might entitle the Reich to demand that Bessarabian and Bukovinian Germans be granted the right to opt in favor of its citizenship.

V

In September 1940, seven weeks after the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union, the Reich began negotiations in Moscow, for the transfer of the German minority in Lithuania and the complementary evacuation of the Germans who had remained in Estonia and Latvia after the transfer operation of November-December 1939. On 10 January 1941, an agreement was reached.⁷

In its legal form this agreement conforms rather closely to its predecessors. The Soviet Union, which absorbed the three states, may be considered a logical party to the contract, as the full-fledged legal successor to their sovereignty.⁸ But the Reich as the second contracting party, in

⁷ *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, November 1940, p. 802.

⁸ The legality of the proceedings by which the Soviet government annexed Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania is not considered here.

this case just as in all previous transfer treaties, had no proper basis for its demands. Germans living in these countries had not been German citizens for many generations and the countries themselves had never been 'under German sovereignty. However, Germany's so-called *Schutzrecht* had already been firmly established by a series of precedents.

Like all the earlier transfer treaties, the agreement of 10 January 1941 was based on the right of option. The joint German-Soviet communique stated: 'German citizens and persons of German [ethnic] nationality residing in the Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics, who express the desire to resettle [in the Reich], may declare their desire in the course of two and one half months after the conclusion of the agreement in the manner provided for by that agreement.'⁹

The communique gave no details concerning the 'manner provided for' by the agreement. It may be assumed that the usual option procedure was accepted as a basis for the resettlement. By what method the eligibility of persons for the right of option was decided is not known. Indications are that the definition of this category was very broad. A Lithuanian source stated that 'persons able to prove their German descent, relationship, graduation from schools in Germany, or possession of property there' were considered 'persons of German nationality.'¹⁰ This extremely elastic definition gave many anti-Soviet Lithuanians the opportunity to declare themselves Germans, opt for resettlement in the Reich, and thus to leave Lithuania legally. Similar situations had arisen in the course of the earlier evacuations from Estonia and Latvia, the Soviet-incorporated eastern Polish provinces, and Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, when numerous Letts, Estonians, Russians, Ukrainians, and others who feared sovietization, took advantage of the transfer agreements and opted for resettlement in the Reich.

⁹ *Mirovoye Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, 1941, p. 128.

¹⁰ *Current News on the Lithuanian Situation*, no. 7, 15 October 1941.

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Index

- Adrianople, Convention of, 12
 Age structure of German minority groups, 171, 200, 218-19, 231, 317; of non-German groups, 430
 Agriculture, 331-2; German stress on, 301-2, 331-3, 350; government aid to, 21-2, 285, 286, 289, 294-6, 375, 422-3, 436-7, 462, 466, 489; *see also* Land
 Alatas, Hulusi, 495
 Albania, 7
Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein, 28
 Allied Armistice Commission, 235
 Allied Control Commission, 433, 459
 Allied Mixed Commission, 68
 Allied Powers, 7, 8; *see also* *names of countries*
 Alsace-Lorraine, 29, 64
 Altgayer, Branimir, 247
 Anglaseil, Maspons L., 9
Ansiedlungs-Kommission, 257-8
 Antonescu, Ion, 446
 Arabs, 457
 Arz, Wilhelm, 179, 227
Auffangsgesellschaft für Kriegsteilnehmerbetriebe, 313
 Austria, 7, 35, 48, 50, 54, 57, 58, 63-4; *see also* South Tyrol
 Austria-Hungary, 3, 53
 Balkan countries, 3, 4, 6; *see also names of countries*
 Baltic states, 9, 42, 43; *see also* Estonia; Latvia; Lithuania
Baltische Nationalausschuss, 68
 Basques, 9
 Batzer, Paul, 291-2, 303
 Bayer, Theodore, 373
 Beck, Min., 9
 Beckerle, Min., 250
 Behrsins, A., 74, 123, 128-9
 Belgium, 29
 Belgrade, 438
 Benes, Eduard, 11, 458, 460
 Berlin, Congress of, 7, 404
Berufseinsatzstelle, 273, 276
 Bessarabia, 174-8, 180-96, 202-5, 436, 505-6
 Beyl, Edmund, 293-4, 296-7, 322, 326-7, 331
 Biological structure of German minority groups, 200, 317; of non-German groups, 396, 397, 430-31
 Bismarck, Prince von, 257
 Blohm, Georg, 295, 299
 Bluntschli, Johann Caspar, 3
 Böhm, Max Hildebert, 29
 Bolshevization, fear of, 96-7, 136, 152-3, 176, 178, 182, 183
 Bontschev, Dr., 423
 Born, Ernst von, 399
 Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of, 67
 Bruckner, Wolfram, 226
 Bucharest, Treaty of, 404
 Buffarini-Guidi, Undersecretary, 57
 Bukovina, Northern, 174-5, 176, 179-81, 184-5, 187-8, 191, 199-205, 469, 505-6; Southern, 174-5, 179-80, 202-4, 225-8, 229-32
 Bulgaria, 3, 7, 8, 30; annexation of Greek territory, 416; . . . of Southern Dobruja, 229, 404-5; . . . of Yugoslav territory, 415-16; colonization of Greek territory, 420-23; emigration of Turks, 492-4; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; transfer of Germans, 250-51; transfer treaties with Greece, 13-16;

- Bulgaria (Cont.)
 . . . with Romania, 404-5, 412-14; . . . with Turkey, 12; withdrawal from Greece and Yugoslavia, 423-4
 Bulgarians, 10, 11; repatriation from U.S.S.R., 444-5; transfers from Greece, 13-16, 464-5, 469; . . . from Northern Dobruja, 405-8, 466-7; . . . from Romania, 414; . . . from Turkish Thrace, 12; to Bulgarian-annexed Greek territory, 420
 Bullitt, William C., 455
 Bülow, Prince von, 257
 Butler, Harold, 451, 456
- Camps, 135, 162-3, 164-5, 169-70, 182, 189, 192, 196-9, 211, 212, 213, 247, 248, 319-20, 324
 Carpatho-Ukraine, 385-7
 Catalanians, 9
 Churchill, Winston, 458
 Ciano, Count, 427
 Citizenship, 41, 54, 55, 68, 82, 86, 93, 143, 234, 250, 273, 274, 275, 321, 373, 416, 427, 477, 497-507
 Clark, Charles Upson, 456-7
 Class, Heinrich, 28
 Commercial enterprises, 285, 286, 306, 311-16, 328
 Compulsory transfer, *see* Option
 Congress of European Minorities (*Congrès des Groupes Nationaux Organisés des États Européens*), 9, 10, 30 n., 33
 Craiova, Treaty of, 405, 408
 Cramer, Hans, 140-41, 142, 143
 Croat Colonization Institute, 441, 443
 Croatia, Independent State of, 245-8, 437-8, 440-43, 501
 Croats, 440-43
 Czechoslovakia, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 29, 30, 31, 36, 41, 42, 45, 46-7, 385-6, 453, 457-8
 Czechs, 386-7, 457
- Dallin, David J., 385
 Danes, 9
 Danzig, 29, 37
 Dargel, Pres., 347
 Darre, Walter, 296, 340, 342
 Denmark, 29, 42
 Deportations of Germans from South Tyrol, 55-6; . . . from U.S.S.R.-held Romania, 236-7; . . . from U.S.S.R.-held Yugoslavia, 241-2; of Greeks from Bulgaria, 417-19, 420; of Hungarians from Northern Transylvania, 433; of Jews from Bulgaria, 417, 419; . . . from Bulgarian-held Greek areas, 419; . . . from Bulgarian-held Yugoslav Macedonia, 417; . . . from German-held Poland, 265, 268-71, 302, 465-6; of Poles from German-held Poland, 214, 215, 216, 221, 265, 266-71, 288-90, 291, 326, 350-51, 465-6; of Romanians from Northern Transylvania, 429; of Serbs from Bulgarian-annexed areas, 417; . . . from Croatia, 440-41, 466; . . . from Hungarian-annexed areas, 434; of Slovenes, 64, 243, 244, 442, 466
Deutsche Abwicklungs Treuband G.m.b.H., 284
Deutsche Abwicklungsstelle für die Umsiedlung Rumäniens, 284
Deutsche Ansiedlungs Gesellschaft, 218
Deutsche Einwandererzentrale (EWZ), 273, 274, 275, 276, 320
Deutsche Treubandverwaltung (DT), 110-16, 127, 284
Deutsche Umsiedlungs Treubandgesellschaft (DUT), 60, 64-5, 107-8, 124-5, 139, 140, 141, 203, 222, 277, 278, 279, 282, 283-7
Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft, 92
Deutsche Wohn- und Siedlungsgesellschaft, 279
Deutsches Mädchenbund, 280
Dienst im Ausland (DIA), 382-3
 Divorces, 103
 Dobruja, 225-7, 228-9, 230-32, 404-12, 491-2

- Duckart, Dr., 142-3
 Dülfer, Helmut, 123
 Du Prel, Maximilian Freiherr, 220
- Economic and occupational structure of German minority groups, 71, 73, 131-2, 171-2, 177, 179, 201-2, 218-19, 232, 317-18, 325-6, 327, 328; of non-German groups, 20-21, 390, 400, 403, 423, 428, 430-31, 463
- Edelman, Maurice, 384
 Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser, Otto, 157-8
 Espionage, 383, 384
 Estonia, 7, 9; departure of Swedes, 400-403; Germans in, 29, 30, 66-72, 79, 81, 94-102, 104-5; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; mutual assistance pact with U.S.S.R., 76, 77, 78; non-aggression treaty with Germany, 75-6; relations with U.S.S.R., 74-7; transfer of Germans, 76-81, 83-6, 94-116, 125, 126-8, 129-30, 138-9, 469; transfer protocol with Germany, 82-3, 84-5, 109-12, 497-8, 501-2, 503, 506-7
 Europe, Central, 3, 4, 6; *see also names of countries*
 European Advisory Commission, 458
 Evans, Jon, 314, 315
 Expropriation, 49, 142, 282, 288-90, 302-3, 308-9, 312, 321, 391, 411, 419, 432, 441, 465-6; *see also Land reform*
- Ferenczi, Imre, 456
 Filov, Bogdan, 420, 423
 Financial aspects of transfer, *see* Loans; Property removal; Property settlement
 Finland, 30, 42, 388-99, 467
 Food, 156, 161, 163, 196-7
 Forster, Albert, 277, 279-80, 302, 337, 345, 347
 France, 48, 75
 Frank, Hans, 173, 214
 Frederick the Great, 257
 Freytag-Loringhoven, Baron von, 505
 Friessner, Johannes, 234
 Frohwein, Hans, 82
 Frymann, Daniel, *see* Class, Heinrich
 Funk, Walter, 114
- Galicia, 10; *see also* Germans, transfer from U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces
 Gayda, Virginio, 53
 German Evangelical Church, 382, 383
 Germans, 6, 9, 10, 11, 32, 33-5
 colonization in Polish Government General, 220-23; in Soviet Wlohyia, 223-4
 distribution in Europe, 29
 fate of transferred minority groups, 452-3, 457
 migrations of, 4, 27, 146, 148
 repatriation planned, 39-44
 resettlement of the Balts: composition of group, 317-18, 325-6, 327, 328; reception in resettlement area, 319-21; financial aid, 320; housing, 321-4; geographical distribution, 325; urban economic resettlement, 325-9; effect of Balts' presence, 329-30; rural resettlement, 331-3; success of resettlement, 333
 resettlement program in Poland: area of resettlement, 255-8; status of Germans, 258-62; administrative reorganization of area, 263; basic policies, 264-5; deportation of Poles and Jews, 266-71, 288-90, 302; administrative machinery, 272-80; economic re-establishment, 281-7; . . . on farms, 288-300; . . . in business, 301-16; grouping of resettlers, 334-6; isolation of Germans from Poles, 337-8; German master-class concept, 338-41; efforts to draw settlers from Germany proper, 341-3; Germanization, 343-6; numerical results,

Germans (Cont.)

348-9; suspension of operations, 349-52; renewal, 352-3; resistance of Poles, 354-63; flight from U.S.S.R. armies, 361-3; fate of remaining Germans, 362-3; evaluation of program, 465-6
retention as minorities planned, 45-7

in Romania, 174-6, 225-7, 233-4;
see also Germans, transfers from Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Northern Dobruja, Southern Bukovina

Sudeten, 10

transfer from Bessarabia: rumored, 174-6; status of Germans, 177-8; treaty, 180, 505-6; reasons for leaving, 177-8, 182-3; number of evacuees, 184-5; departure, 186; organization, 186-7; property settlement, 187-91; journey, 191-9; composition of group, 200-202; reception in Reich, 202-3; resettlement, 202-5

transfer from Bulgaria, 250-51

transfer from Estonia: status of Germans, 66-9, 70-72, 81, 104; announcement, 76-7; reactions, 77-81, 94-102; protocol, 82-3, 84-5, 109-12, 497-8, 501-2, 503, 506-7; departure, 83-4, 85; organization, 83, 90-92, 469; number of evacuees, 84, 85, 106; reasons for leaving, 94-100; reasons for staying, 102-4; final evacuation, 105-7; rumored return, 107-8; property settlement, 109-16, 124-5, 129-30, 138-9; economic effects of departure, 125, 126, 127-8

transfer from Germany to incorporated Polish provinces, 304-5, 309-10, 341-3, 353

transfer from Latvia: status of group, 66-9, 72-4, 81, 104-5; announcement, 76-7; reactions, 77-81, 94-102; treaty, 86, 88-9, 116-22, 497, 498-502, 503, 506-7; organization, 87, 90-92, 469; de-

Germans (Cont.)

parture, 87-9, 90; number of evacuees, 88-90, 92, 106; reasons for leaving, 94-100; reasons for staying, 102-4; final evacuation, 105-7; rumored return, 107-8; property settlement, 116-25, 129-30, 138-9; economic effects of departure, 125-6, 128-9

transfer from Lithuania: status of group, 131-3; rumored evacuation, 133-4; treaty, 134, 506-7; departure, 134-7; number of evacuees, 134-5; property settlement, 138-9; return, 139-44

transfer from Northern Bukovina: rumored evacuation, 174-6; status of group, 179; treaty, 180, 505-6; reasons for leaving, 183; number of evacuees, 184-5; departure, 186; organization, 187, 469; property settlement, 187-8, 191; journey, 199-200; composition of group, 200-202; reception in Reich, 202-3; resettlement, 202-5

transfer from Northern Dobruja: treaty, 225, 501; status of group, 228; number of evacuees, 229; journey, 230; property settlement, 230-31; composition of group, 231-2; resettlement, 232

transfer from Polish Government General, 215-19

transfer from South Tyrol, 22, 48-65, 469, 501-2

transfer from Southern Bukovina: treaty, 225, 501; number of evacuees, 227; journey, 229-30; property settlement, 230-31; composition of group, 231-2; resettlement, 232

transfer from Transylvania, 234-6

transfer from U.S.S.R.: minor transfers, 206-7; Black Sea area, 207-13

transfer from U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces: status of group, 146-9; treaty, 145-6, 502-

Germans (Cont.)

- 5; organization, 150, 153-9; number of evacuees, 150-51; reasons for leaving, 152-3; property settlement, 165-9; reception in Reich, 169-70; composition of group, 170-71; resettlement, 172-3
- transfer from Volga River area, 380-85
- transfer from Yugoslavia: distribution, 238, 240; status of group, 239, 240; transfer from Serbia, 240, 242; deportation from U.S.S.R.-held areas, 241-2; transfer from Syrmia and Vojvodina, 241; . . . from Gottschee area, 242-4; . . . from Croatia, 245-8, 501
- transfers of, map, 254
- Germany, 3, 8, 9; agreement with Sweden on repatriation of Estonian Swedes, 402-3; annexation of Austria, 35; . . . of Memel, 36; . . . of Sudeten, 36; invasion of Poland, 38; minorities pact with Poland, 37-8; non-aggression pact with Poland, 37; . . . with U.S.S.R., 38, 76; non-aggression treaties with Estonia and Latvia, 75-6; occupation of Czechoslovakia, 36; pact with Romania creating Transnistria, 445; . . . with U.S.S.R. on spheres of influence, 38, 134, 145, 370; policy on Germans abroad, 27-47; role in repatriation of Estonian Swedes, 401-3; . . . in transfer of Ingermanlanders, 395-7; transfer agreement with Independent State of Croatia, 441-2; transfer protocol with Estonia, 82-3, 84-5, 109-12, 497-8, 501-2, 503, 506-7; transfer treaties with Bulgaria, 250; . . . with Croatia, 245-8, 440-43, 501; . . . with Italy, 52, 53-4, 243, 501-2; . . . with Latvia, 86, 88-9, 116-22, 497, 498-502, 503, 506-7; . . . with Romania, 225, 229, 501; . . . with U.S.S.R., 105, 134, 145-6, 180, 367-8, 369-70, 501, 502-7; treaty with Czechoslovakia on citizenship and option, 41
- Gibson, Hugh, 455
- Gigurtu, M. J., 426
- Globocnik, Jan, 217, 220-22
- Goebbels, Joseph, 341
- Goedicke, Dorothea, 60, 63
- Goering, Hermann, 36
- Gradmann, W., 42, 150, 151, 171, 275
- Great Britain, 48, 75, 458
- Greece, 3, 7, 8, 30; colonization by Bulgaria, 420-23; loss of territory to Bulgaria, 416; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; transfer treaties with Bulgaria, 13-16; . . . with Turkey, 12-13, 16-22; withdrawal of Bulgarians, 423-4
- Greeks, deportation from Bulgarian-annexed areas, 417-19, 420, 424; in Turkey, 12-13; transfer from Bulgaria, 13-16, 464-5, 469; . . . from Turkey, 16-22, 458, 459, 461-4
- Greifelt, Ulrich, 272, 282, 337, 351
- Greiser, Arthur, 212, 220, 271, 277, 278, 280, 288, 302, 303, 305, 311, 312, 335, 337-8, 347, 348, 349-50, 353, 361
- Groza, Petre, 433
- Grundstückgesellschaft*, 279
- Hahn, Herbert, 361
- Halifax, Viscount, 262
- Handicrafts, 285, 286, 303, 304, 308-11, 328
- Harlos, Karl, 148
- Hartwich, Carl, 297-8
- Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* (HTO), 278-9, 302-3, 309, 310, 314, 315
- Hazard, John N., 153
- Health, 171, 274; *see also* Medical care
- Heckel, Heinz, 149

- Henderson, Nevile, 262
 Himmler, Heinrich, 53, 153, 272, 318, 325, 346, 350
 Hitler, Adolf, 32-3, 35-6, 38, 39-40, 44, 51, 52, 75, 99-100, 145, 159, 262, 266-7, 343-4, 416
Hitler Jugend, 280
 Hlond, Cardinal, 326
 Hoffmeyer, Obersturmbannführer, 156, 159, 187
 Hohenstein, Hans, 79
 Hoover, Herbert, 455
Hotel- und Gastwirtschaftsgesellschaft, 279
 Housing, 23, 135, 143, 162-3, 169-70, 196-9, 211, 248, 268, 271, 279, 294, 297, 298, 319-20, 321-4, 393, 411, 422, 489
 Hula, Erich, 460
 Hungarians, 4, 6, 10, 11; flight from Northern Transylvania, 433; . . . from Southern Transylvania, 428-9; in Northern Transylvania, 427; postwar status in Southern Transylvania, 454; repatriation from Belgrade, 438; . . . from Bessarabia, 436; . . . from Bosnia, 436-7; . . . from Bukovina, 435-6; . . . from Croatia, 437-8; . . . from Moldavia, 436; resettlement, 434-5, 436
 Hungary, 6, 7, 8; agreement with Romania on population exchange, 427-8; annexation of Northern Transylvania, 425-7; . . . of Yugoslav territory, 434; Germans in, 29, 30, 31, 42, 45, 46, 47; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; repatriation policy, 434-9
 Industrialization, 285, 286, 301-8, 328, 462
 Ingermanlanders, 395-9, 467
 Intelmann, Alfred, 91, 101
 Iraq, 7
 Irredentism, 4 n., 10, 11, 31 ff., 51, 52, 258-9, 415, 425, 429-30, 453, 454
 Italy, 3, 8, 29, 31, 43, 48, 242; transfer treaties with Germany, 52, 53-4, 243, 501-2; *see also* South Tyrol
 Jäckh, Ernest, 464
 Jackson, John Hampden, 94, 97
 Jaross, Dr., 10
 Jekeli, Herman, 232-3
 Jesser, Dr., 10
 Jews, 9, 70, 155, 354, 373; deportation of, 265, 268-71, 302, 417, 419, 465-6; *see also* Expropriation
 Jones, F. Elwin, 34-5, 225-6
 Kahra, Eljas, 389
 Kaitera, Pentti, 396, 397, 399
 Karelians, 388-94, 467
 Kaya Bey, Sukru, 489, 490, 492, 493, 494, 495
 Kennard, Howard, 262
 Klausner, Leopold C., 455-6
 Koch, Erwin, 307
 Koivisto, Jaho, 388
 Kot, Stanislaw, 358
Kraft durch Freude, 319
 Krieg, Hans, 43 n., 274, 324-5, 328, 351
 Kröger, Erhard, 91, 101
 Kuhn, Adam, 228
Kulturverband (Lithuania), 133, 134, 136
 Kummer, Dr., 217
 Kundt, Ernst, 46, 47
 Ladas, Stephen P., 459, 464-5
 Land, collectivization in U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces, 153, 166; . . . in Volga River areas, 382; German holdings in Bessarabia, 177, 182; . . . in Black Sea areas, 207; . . . in Bulgaria, 251; . . . in Dobruja, 228, 230-31; . . . in Estonia and Latvia, 66, 67, 68, 111-13, 118-19; . . . in Lithuania, 132, 142-3; . . . in Northern Bukovina, 179; . . . in Poland, 259-60, 261-2; . . . in Polish Government General,

Land (Cont.)

- 216; . . . in U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces, 147, 149; . . . in Volga River area, 381, 382; . . . in Yugoslavia, 241, 243; reclamation, 20, 462; reform, Estonia, 70-71, 112-13; . . . Latvia, 72, 118-19; . . . Lithuania, 132; . . . Poland, 259; . . . Romania, 491; for resettlement, 18, 20, 21-2, 49, 142-3, 222, 288-300, 331, 348, 374-5, 379, 390-91, 417, 422-3, 434-7, 443, 462, 489, 495
- Landesarbeitsamt*, 273, 276
- Laserson, M., 93
- Latvia, Germans in, 29, 30, 66-9, 72-4, 79, 81, 94-102, 104-5; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; mutual assistance pact with U.S.S.R., 76, 77, 78; non-aggression treaty with Germany, 75-6; relations with U.S.S.R., 74-7; transfer of Germans, 76-81, 87-108, 116-26, 128-30, 138-9, 469; transfer treaty with Germany, 86, 88-9, 116-22, 497, 498-502, 503, 506-7
- Lausanne, Convention of, 13, 16-22, 488
- Lavergne, Bernard, 11, 455
- Laydoner, Gen., 102
- League of Nations, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 19, 20, 30, 258, 259, 260, 425, 451, 455, 468
- Lengyel, Emil, 464
- Liechtenstein, 30
- Lietzman, Obergruppenführer, 401
- Linkomies, Edwin, 393
- Lithuania, 7, 29, 30, 131-44, 506-7
- Lithuanians, 143, 367-70, 372-9
- Loans, international, 15-16, 20, 24, 462; national, 20-22, 24, 283-7, 375, 391, 392, 397, 403, 411, 423, 431, 436, 462, 489, 495
- Loesch, Karl C. von, 28
- Lucacz, Bela, 233
- Lück, Kurt, 337
- Lutz, Hans, 99
- Luukka, Emil, 393-4
- Luxembourg, 29, 30, 64
- Macartney, C. A., 151-2
- MacCormac, John, 62
- Magyars, 4; *see also* Hungarians
- Manolescu, Min., 426
- Markus, Johannes, 82
- Marriages, mixed, 102-3, 151, 275, 503
- Mass evaluation of property, 130, 138-9, 471
- Mastromattei, Giuseppe, 56, 58, 59
- Medical care, 135, 156, 163-5, 169, 196, 197, 470
- Memel, 29, 36
- Meyer, Konrad, 298, 299, 301
- Mikolajczyk, Stanislaw, 288, 291
- Minorities, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 34-5, 452-4; distribution in South-eastern Europe, map, 5; international protection of, 7, 8, 9, 30, 45, 451-2; protection by mother country, 35-7, 45, 47, 367-8, 502, 504-5, 507; transfer of non-German, map, 366; *see also names of countries and groups*; Age structure . . . ; Biological structure . . . ; Economic and occupational structure . . .
- Molotoff, Vyacheslaff, 368
- Montandon, Georges, 454-5
- Moslems, *see* Turks
- Mothander, Carl, 402
- Munich conference, 36, 40
- Mussolini, Benito, 50, 52, 55, 58, 59, 61
- Nansen, Fridtjof, 455
- Narew River district, *see* Germans, transfer from U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces
- National Sozialistische Frauenschaft*, 322
- National Sozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV), 278, 294, 319, 322, 329
- Nationalities, principle of, 3, 4
- Netherlands, 29, 30
- Neuilly, Convention of, 13-16

- Neuilly, Treaty of, 6, 404
 Neumann, Franz, 45, 47
 Newman, Bernard, 233, 404, 409, 452, 456
 Non-German elements in German transfer groups, 92-3, 135-7, 140, 151, 185
 Norem, Owen J. C., 136
 Nottbeck, Arvid von, 101
- Obrascher, Leonhard, 155-6, 178, 181, 184, 186, 188-91, 409
 Oertzen, F. W. von, 259
 Option, 13-14, 18, 23, 41, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58-9, 83, 84, 85, 92, 106, 136, 140, 146, 180, 216, 243, 246-7, 367, 372-3, 376, 386, 397, 398, 405, 412, 417, 427, 442, 473-9, 491, 497-507; reverse option, 477-8
Ostdeutsche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft m.b.H., 279
Ostland, 291
Ostmarkverein, 257
Ostpreussische Landgesellschaft, 292
- Palestine, 22, 457
 Paris Peace Conference, 3, 4, 13
 Pavelitch, Ante, 440
 Peasant response to transfer, 151-2, 157-8, 471-2
 Permanent Court of International Justice, The Hague, 260
 Peters, Dr., 10
 Peters, Walter, 260
 Podesta, Agestino, 61
 Poland, 8, 9, 11, 42, 43, 46; administrative reorganization of German-held areas, 214, 263; boundary dispute with U.S.S.R., 371-2; colonization of Government General by Germans, 220-23; German resettlement program in, 255-353; Germans in, 29, 30, 31, 146-9, 362-3, 453, 457; invasions of, 38, 145, 361; minorities pact with Germany, 37-8; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; non-aggression pact with Germany, 37; partition of, 38, 145; transfer of Germans from Government General to incorporated provinces, 215-19; transfer of Germans from U.S.S.R.-incorporated provinces, 146-73
 Poles, 457, 504; deportations of, 214, 215, 216, 221, 265, 266-71, 282, 288-90, 291, 302, 325, 326, 354, 465-6; exploitation by Germans, 337-8; isolation from Germans, 350; resistance to Germans, 354-63; transfer from U.S.S.R., 377; *see also* Expropriation
 Polish Committee for National Liberation, 360, 362-3, 372-6, 377-80, 453
 Politis, Nicolas, 80, 456
 Potsdam Declaration, 459
 Property removal, 14, 21, 23, 41, 56, 281-7, 375, 470; from Bessarabia, 186, 187, 189, 195; Bukovina, 436; Bulgaria, 251; Carpatho-Ukraine, 386; Croatia, 248; Czechoslovakia, 41; Estonia, 109-11; Karelia, 389, 394; Latvia, 116-18; Lithuania, 135; Lower Styria, 436; Northern Bukovina, 186, 187, 210; Northern Dobruja, 230-31, 407; Northern and Southern Transylvania, 428, 429; Poland, 269, 270; Romania, 491, 492; Southern Bukovina, 231; Sudeten, 41; U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces, 159, 160, 165-9
 Property settlement, 23-4, 277, 278-9, 281-7, 421, 470-71, 472; Bulgarian-Greek, 14-15; Czechoslovak-U.S.S.R., 386; German-Bulgarian, 251; German-Croatian, 248, 442-3; German-Estonian, 84-5, 109-16, 320; German-Italian, 56, 59, 243; German-Latvian, 87, 90, 116-25, 320; German-Romanian, 230-31; German-U.S.S.R., 129-30, 138-9, 165-7, 187-91; Polish (PCNL)-U.S.S.R., 375; Romanian-Bulgarian, 405, 407-8; Romanian-Hungarian, 428, 436;

Property settlement (Cont.)

Turkish-Bulgarian, 12; Turkish-Greek, 19; Turkish-Romanian, 491-2

Psychological pressures in transfer, 23, 57-8, 62, 88, 94-100, 152-3, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 247, 475

Radescu, Nicolai, 236

Refugee Resettlement Loan, 15-16

Refugee Settlement Commission, 19 ff.

Reich Commission for Strengthening of Germanism, 272, 278, 299

Reich Ministry of Finance, 273, 277

Reichert, von, 334

Reichsarbeitsdienst, 135

Reichsgemeinschaft für Raummordnung, 293

Reichsnährstand, 277, 278

Reichsstelle für Raummordnung, 272, 293

Reichstudentenführung der Bundesleitung des Volksbundes für das Deutschtum im Ausland, 293

Reinthal, Anton, 340

Resettlement, 23, 374, 472-3

German program in Poland, *see* Germans, resettlement program in Poland

of Bulgarians from Greece, 15-16; from Northern Dobruja, 466-7

of Germans from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, 202-5; from Bulgaria, 251; from Croatia, 248-9; from Estonia and Latvia, 317-33; from Lithuania, 139; from South Tyrol, 62-4; from U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces, 172-3; from Volga River area, 383, 384; from Yugoslavia, 244; in Poland, 214, 220-23, 232; in Soviet Wolhynia, 223-4

of Greeks from Turkey, 19-21

of Hungarians from Bosnia, 436-7; from Romania and Croatia, 434-5, 438-9

Resettlement (Cont.)

of Ingermanlanders, 397

of Karelians, 389-92, 394

of Lithuanian Germans from Germany, 139-44

of Romanians from Northern Transylvania, 431-2; from South Dobruja, 410, 466-7

of Szeklers from Bukovina, 436

of Turks, 488-9; from Bulgaria, 494; from Greece, 21-2; from Romania, 492

'Revisionist' countries, 8

Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 44, 76, 129, 176, 427

Riess, Curt, 354-5

Ripka, Hubert, 453

Robinson, Jacob, 135-6, 457

Romania, 3, 8, 9, 10; agreements with Hungary on population exchange, 427-8; . . . with Turkey on repatriation of Turks, 491-2; cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, 176; . . . of Southern Dobruja, 229, 404-5; deportation of Germans to U.S.S.R., 236-7; Germans in, 29, 30, 31, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 174-6, 225-7, 233-4; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; pact with Germany on Transnistria, 445; sovereignty of Transylvania, 425-7, 433; transfer treaties with Bulgaria, 404-5, 412-14; . . . with Germany, 225, 229, 501; *see also* Bessarabia; Bukovina, Northern; Bukovina, Southern; Dobruja; Transylvania

Romanian Demographic Institute, 427

Romanians, 6, 506; flight and deportation from Northern Transylvania, 427-32; transfer from Bulgaria, 412-14; . . . from Southern Dobruja, 408-12, 466-7; transfer to Transnistria and ordered withdrawal, 446-7

Rosen, Hermann von, 67

Rosenberg, Alfred, 266, 340-41

- Russia, 3, 48; *see also* Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
- Russians, 9, 209, 367-70, 372-9, 386, 503-4
- Russians, White, 10, 145-6, 154, 185, 367-70, 371, 372-9, 502-5
- Ryti, Risto, 388
- Sabotage, 355-8
- St. Germain, Treaty of, 6, 29, 48
- Sanitation, 156, 163-5, 196, 470
- Schiemann, Paul, 33, 104
- Schneefuss, Walter, 49
- Schulenberg, Count von, 382
- Schuschnigg, Kurt, 50
- Schutze, H., 260
- Schuyler, Gen., 236
- Séfériades, Stellio, 459
- Seipel, Ignaz, 50
- Sepp, Leo, 112, 113-14, 115
- Serbia, 3; *see also* Yugoslavia
- Serbs, 241, 416-17, 424, 434, 438-9, 440-41
- Serbs, Lusatian, 9
- Sickmeyer, SS-Oberführer, 229
- Simpson, John Hope, 459-60
- Slavic migrations, 4
- Slavs, 4, 266
- Slovaks, 386-7
- Slovenes, 64, 243, 244, 442, 466
- Sommer, Hellmuth, 157, 166, 169
- Soots, Gen., 101
- South Tyrol, 22, 29, 43, 48-65, 469
- Soviet Russia, *see* Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
- Spain, 9
- Speed of transfer, 23, 62, 8-9, 90, 469-70
- Stalin, Joseph, 433, 458
- Stamati, T. von, 178, 183
- Stanza, Giuseppe, 57
- Status quo* countries, 8
- Stegmanis, A., 124
- Stettinius, Edward R., 458
- Stevens, Edmund, 103
- Stronsky, Stanislaw, 351
- Styria, Lower, 64, 204, 244, 441-3
- Suicides, 103
- Sukru Kaya Bey, *see* Kaya Bey, Sukru
- Sweden, 30, 400-401, 402-3
- Swedes, 9; in Estonia, 401-3; in Finland, 390, 394
- Switzerland, 29, 30
- Szeklers, 435-6, 439
- Taborsky, Edward, 360
- Tabouis, Genevieve, 79
- Tatar-Bunar, 182-3
- Technische Nothilfe*, 135
- Textile industry in Poland, 204, 305-7
- Thompson, Warren S., 456
- Thomson, David, 460
- Thoss, Alfred, 157, 180, 181-2, 189, 195, 198
- Tito, Marshal, 242
- Tolischus, Otto D., 85, 87, 97, 103, 121
- Tornau, Dr., 150
- Transfer, as last resort, 467-8; basic considerations in, 23-4, 468-79; opponents of, 459-60; proponents of, 454-9; *see also* names of groups for specific transfers
- Transfer treaties, *see* names of contracting countries
- Transnistria, 208, 210-11, 445-7
- Transportation, 23, 83, 87, 134-5, 156, 158, 159-62, 191-7, 199, 210-11, 218, 229-30, 361, 374, 406-7, 470
- Transylvania, 174-5, 232-7, 425-33, 453-4, 456, 457
- Trianon, Treaty of, 425
- Tupits, Arthur, 112-13
- Turkey, 7, 30, 42; agreements with Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia on repatriation of Turks, 491-4; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; repatriation policy, 40, 488-96; transfer treaties with Bulgaria, 12; . . . with Greece, 12-13, 16-22; under-population, 488
- Turks, projected transfer from Greece, 12-13; repatriation (1928-33), 488; repatriation (1939-40), 496; repatriation from

- Turks (Cont.)
 Bulgaria, 12, 492-4; . . . from Romania, 491-2; . . . from Yugoslavia, 494; resettlement, 488-9, 492, 494-6; transfer from Greece, 18-22, 458, 459, 461-4
 Twardowsky, Min., 87
 Übelhör, Pres., 338
 Ukrainians, 10, 145-6, 154, 185, 209, 367-70, 371, 372-9, 386, 502-5
 Ulmanis, Karl, 68, 78, 101
Umsiedlungs - Treuband - Aktiengesellschaft (UTAG), 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 129, 167, 284
Union Internationale des Associations pour la Société des Nations, 30 n., 33
 Union of Czechoslovak Socialists, 457
 Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, 458; agreement with Sweden on repatriation of Estonian Swedes, 400-401; annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, 176; . . . of Carpatho-Ukraine, 385; . . . of Polish territory, 370-71; boundary dispute with Poland, 371-2; colonization by Germans, 223-4; Germans in, 29, 30; invasions of Poland, 38, 361; minor transfers of Germans, 206-7; mutual assistance pact with Estonia and Latvia, 76, 77, 78; non-aggression pact with Germany, 38, 76; pact with Germany on spheres of influence, 38, 134, 145, 370; peace treaty with Finland, 388; relations with Baltic states, 74-7, 78, 134; renewed hostilities with Finland, 392; role in transfers of German minorities, 43-4, 80, 180-81, 351-2; transfer agreements with Polish Committee of National Liberation, 372-6; transfer of Black Sea Germans, 207-13, 353; . . . of Volga Germans, 380-85; transfer treaties with Czechoslovakia, 385-6; . . . with Germany, 105, 134, 145-6, 180, 367-8, 369-70, 501, 502-7; *see also* Bessarabia; Bukovina, Northern; Ingermanlanders; Poland
 United States, 458
 Uzmay, Hakki, 495
 Venizelos, Premier, 13, 455
Verband der Deutschen Volksgruppen, 33
Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA), 28, 156
 Versailles, Treaty of, 6 ff., 29, 258
 Vescan, Teofil, 457
 Vienna award, 427-8, 433
 Viereck, Peter, 266
 Vinogradov, Sergei, 236
Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, 51
Volksdeutsche Einwandererberatungsstelle, 273, 276
Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, 217, 272
 Voluntary transfer, *see* Option
 Waldeck, Countess, 182, 183, 195
 Walz, Gustav Adolf, 36-7
 Webster, Donald Everest, 463-4, 495-6
 Weingärtner, Arnold, 226-7
 Wends, 457
 Westphalia, Peace of, 7
 Williams, Wythe, 322-3
 Wilson, Woodrow, 48
 Winkler, Hans, 29
 Wiskemann, Elizabeth, 38
 Wolhynia, *see* Germans, transfer from U.S.S.R.-incorporated Polish provinces
 Wolhynia, Soviet, 210, 223-4
 Wollert, Dr., 115, 127
 World War I, 3, 4, 6-10, 13, 29, 48, 67, 258, 404, 425
 Yugoslavia, 8, 9, 10; Bulgarian colonization policy, 420; Bulgarian withdrawal, 423-4; deportation of Germans to U.S.S.R., 241;

Yugoslavia (Cont.)

deportations from Slovenia and Dalmatia, 243; dismemberment, 240, 242, 415-16, 434; emigration of Turks, 404; Germans in, 29, 30, 31, 42, 45, 46, 47, 238-41, 245; minorities treaty with Allied Powers, 7; transfer of Germans from Gottschee area, 242-4; . . .

from Serbia, 240; . . . from Syrmia and Voivodina, 241; *see also* Croatia, Independent State of

Yugoslavs, 6

Zangwill, Israel, 455

Zoch, Wilhelm, 334-5

Zoeckler, Theodor, 152, 166, 168, 170

